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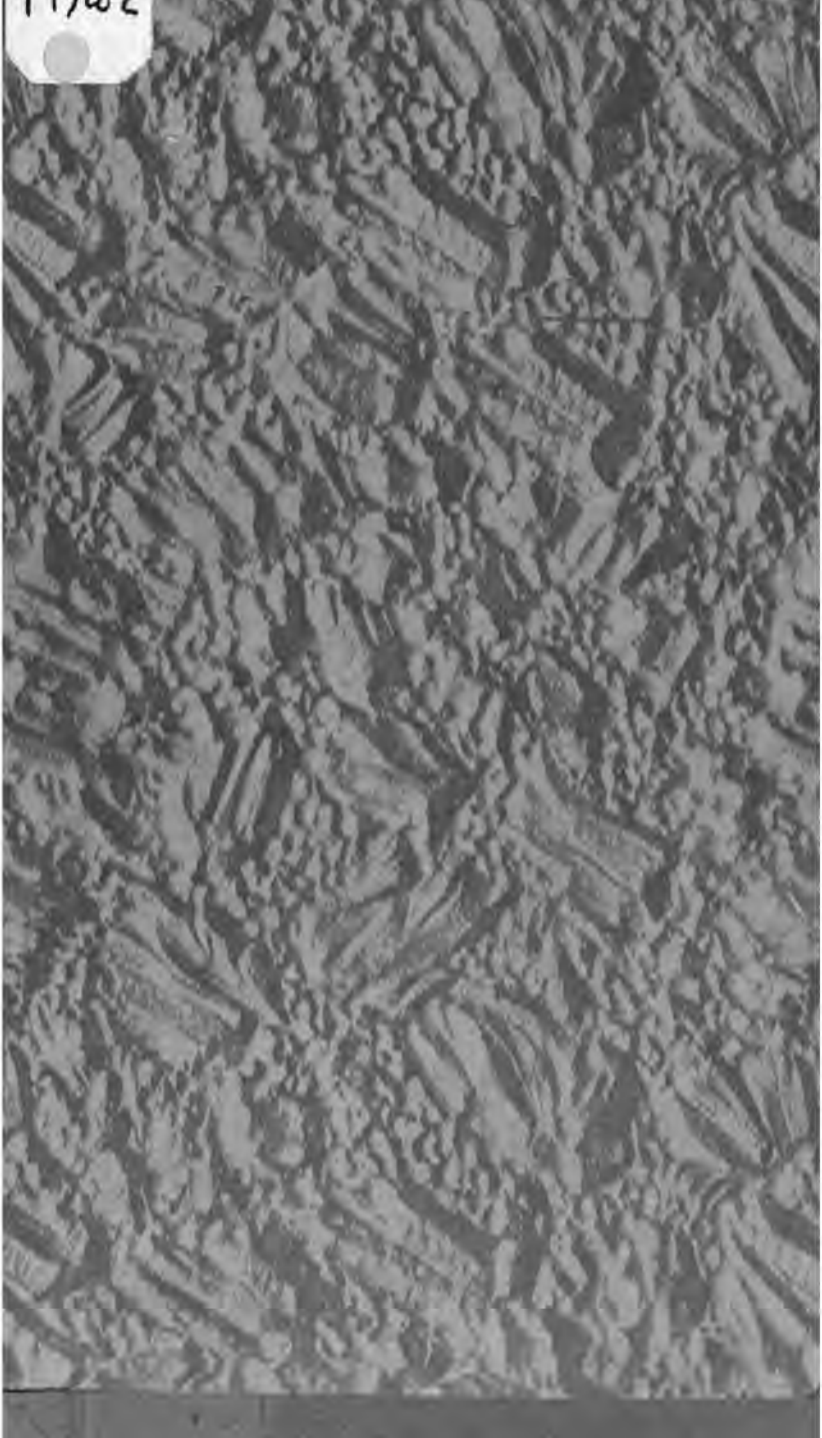

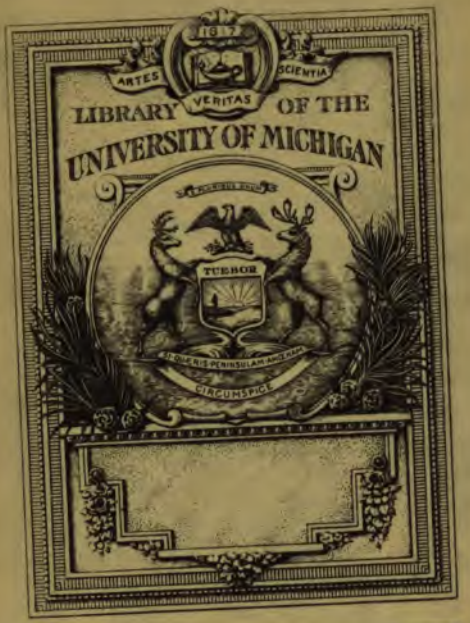

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THE WREN

By BOOTH TARKINGTON

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THE WREN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

BOOTH TARKINGTON

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The following is a copy of the play-bill of the first performance of "THE WREN."

GAIETY THEATRE, NEW YORK, October 10, 1921

THE WREN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY
BOOTH TARKINGTON

(Direction of George C. Tyler and A. L. Erlanger)

THE CAST

CAP'N OLDS	*George Fawcett*
MRS. FREEHART	*Marion Abbott*
FRAZEE	*John Flood*
FRANCIS	*Sam Reed*
MRS. FRAZEE	*Pauline Armitage*
RODDY	*Leslie Howard*
SEEBY	*Helen Hayes*

The Scene of the three acts is "Cap'n Olds Place" on the New England coast. The time, an afternoon and evening and the following morning.

THE WREN

ACT I

The former central hall and parlor and "sitting-room" of a New England farm-house. The partitions have been removed and the hall, the parlor and the sitting-room have been thrown into one—a large "living-room." The result, cheerful enough, is rather interesting; something of the "atmosphere" of traditional New England is evident; though it is not produced by "heirlooms" and "quaint old furniture" that have never "been out of the family." The former double front doors of the house (paneled) have been rubbed down and stained to a dark flat tone; then made dully lustrous. They are in the back wall (C.) making the Entrance, center. They stand open; just up of them is a narrow platform—the veranda that has been added to the house. Up of the veranda can be seen a strip of lawn, the top of the low hill on which the house stands. Then, less than half a mile away is the placid summer sea; a glimpse of creamy shallow surf on a pale yellow beach crowned with long green grass—such a beach and landscape as one gets not far seaward of the State Road a mile or two northeast of Ogdenquit.

Down R. *is a door; up* R. *(in* R. *wall) is another and there are corresponding doors up* L. *and down* L. *in* L. *wall. These doors are dark, similar to double doors up* C., *and the woodwork about them is ivory in tint similar to the wainscoting. The walls have been well considered. There is a low, paneled wood "dado" or wainscoting, about three-and-a-half feet high; it is a deep ivory in color, and the tone is not cold. Above this is a "Colonial Landscape" wall-paper, of very good design—probably from Italian 18th Century blocks, though it is a modern reproduction. The walls should not be painted above the wainscoting; actual "Landscape Wall-paper" should be used, put on and then tinted over with a Sienna wash. A whole back drop is not needed, as only a backing screen may be set up of* C.E. *Foliage, hills, castles, pagodas, figures and birds are seen in it—especially great quantities of foliage—but none of it is obtrusive; it is rather brownish, or "Sienna," and is kept "quiet," is never cold in tone though never very warm, either. From the ceiling there hangs an oil-lamp lustre—about 1850 to '65—not an opulent one, not "suggesting dames and beaux," but sufficiently graceful. There are two windows in the rear wall, balancing each other; they have oblong panes, six up and three across; are curtained with chintz and inexpensive machine lace. There are two rather hard paintings of square-rigged ships, framed in narrow gilt; one is on* L. *wall; the other,* R.

Against R. *wall, down, is a Chippendale reproduction, a wall table or consol, with wax fruit under a glass dome. This is beneath the ship painting* R. *There is a small sofa of "Colonial" de-*

sign R.C. *and up of it, against the back of the sofa, a small stiffish table with a lustre oil-lamp, converted to electricity, and of the "1850 period."* L.C. *is a "gate-leg" table with a "Colonial" cover; some books upon it. A Chippendale "highboy" is against the wall down* L. *under the ship painting* L. *Up, against* L. *wall is a small writing desk, a "Colonial" reproduction.*

There is a small upright piano up L. *the back obliquely toward us; almost covering the back is an old Italian brocade or embroidery, mellow and pleasant.* R. *in the corner, is a small round "tavern table" with a bowl of flowers; and there are a few flowers (not a great hot-house bunch) on the table* L.C. *The chairs used are rather stiffish; farmer "Colonial."*

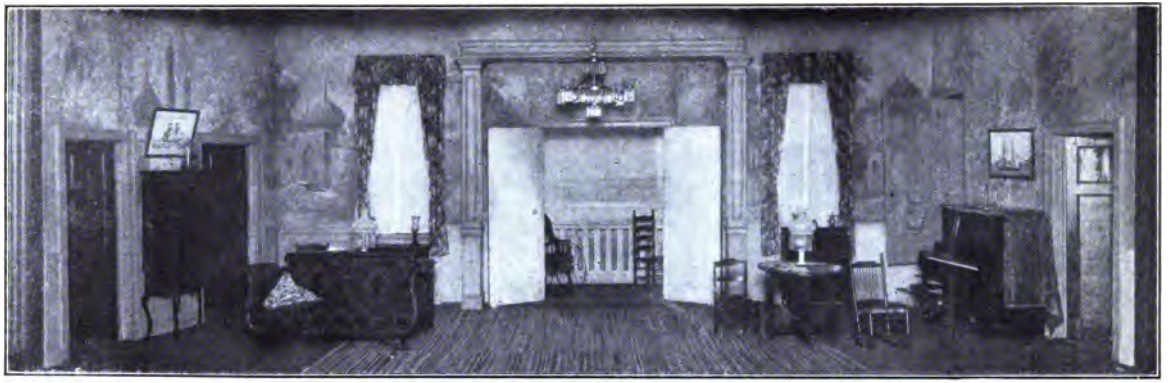
The room is pleasant, but there is something a little rigid and sparse about it; the furniture is not luxurious—it is not "New Englandy"; one concession is an upholstered (chintz) rocker L.C. *near the "gate-leg" table. The effect is not at all that of the summer resort cottage interior, or country-house interior, familiar to the stage.*

Upon the veranda is an old man in a wheel chair; the upright type of chair; it can be moved by the occupant turning the wheels by hand. The old man has white hair and a white mustache, not a fashionable mustache, but yet not a scraggly one. His complexion is rather mottled and his eyes are watery; he has been stout and hearty before becoming an invalid. He wears silver spectacles, a sea officer's old dark blue cap—about the same as a shabby yachting cap—a double breasted old dark sack coat; a

celluloid collar and a narrow black bow tie; a white shirt; a heavy plated watch-chain, doubled, across his waistcoat. His legs are concealed by an old rug, which is placed about them, and there is a little old shawl about his shoulders. When he speaks, he does so simply and without any special mannerism; a light cough interrupts him at times. There is a suggestion of the Maine coast cadence and accent. He is smoking; his back is three quarters to front. A few moments after the rise of the curtain he puts his cigar out by smothering the fire against the lid of a little metal box he takes from his coat pocket. He puts the stump in this box carefully, and returns the box to his pocket. Then he shivers a little and decides to come indoors. He turns one wheel, turning the chair, then propels the chair forward. He runs a wheel against the door frame and is jammed. Backs off, but is jammed again. He says, in a muttering voice, "Damn chair!" and jams a third time. An old fashioned brass dinner bell (the brass very bright) hangs to the arm of his chair by a string. He rings it. Waits. Rings again.

Then after a moment, MRS. FREEHART *enters down* R. *She is a stoutish, phlegmatic and expressionless woman of fifty or more; dressed in serviceable working-clothes suitable for a country boarding-house cook. Her sleeves are rolled up and she wipes her hands on a checked apron as she comes in.*

MRS. FREEHART. *(In dull voice as she enters)* Wha'chu want, Cap'n?



The stage of the Gaiety Theatre, New York, set for "THE WREN"

CAPTAIN. I always *do* jam in this door. Where's Seeby? *(His voice is strong, but tremulous.)*

MRS. FREEHART. Out helpin' Francis with the weedin'. *(Her accent is clearly New England's; the short "i"; in the four words above in which it occurs, it is rather marked, but not stressed; different from the Midland "help'n," "weed'n," and "Fransus.")*

CAPTAIN. Well, *you* git me in, then. It comes on a little smart from sou'—sou'-east a bit ago. *(As she comes to him and takes hold of the chair-back.)* Nothin' 'cept a little breeze, but I chill dreadful easy, since I had my stroke. *(Getting out a white handkerchief and applying it to his nose.)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(Pushing him in)* Well, we all got to go *some* time, Cap'n. *(To* L. *of table* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(A little crisply)* I ain't gone yet! *(Puts his handkerchief away.* MRS. FREEHART *folds rug, put it on chair* R. *of* C. *door.)* There, leggo. I can take care myself now. *(His eye has been struck by the piano, as she wheeled him in, and now he points to it.)* Who done that?

MRS. FREEHART. Done what?

CAPTAIN. Put that on the piano.

MRS. FREEHART. Seeby did.

CAPTAIN. You know what that is she's put on it?

MRS. FREEHART. *(She crosses* L. *to brocade)* Got it out of your sea-trunk in the garrit. *(Examining the old fabric on piano.)*

CAPTAIN. I bought that off a smuggler in the port o' Marseilles—Marseile-ya *they* call it—in eighteen hundred an' eighty-one. I was first mate the ship "Lucy Jones." She was a slow ship, the "Lucy Jones" was. Who told Seeby she could take an' git that out my sea-trunk?

MRS. FREEHART. She was showin' the things in it to the he-boarder. That artist.

CAPTAIN. D'he tell her to put it on the piano?

MRS. FREEHART. Guess he did.

CAPTAIN. *(Not exactly grumbling but commenting without pleasure as he looks about the room)* Yes; he's told her *lots* o' things, she's fixed the place different on account of. *(Looking at the table down* R.*)* *Last* season he told her to git them wax peaches —goin' back to *old* fashions. Sh'd think an *artist* 'd be more up-to-date!

MRS. FREEHART. *(At* C.E.*)* Want the doors closed? *(She is preparing to leave him and go off* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. No. Let 'em open. *(*MRS. FREEHART *has happened to glance off from* C. *to* R. *and her attention is arrested.)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(Calling off) Hee-uh! (This is Maine for "Here," and is known to the ears, if not to the active consciousness, of all tourists and summerers familiar with the seaboard.* MRS. FREEHART *repeats it, raising her voice.) Hee-uh!*

CAPTAIN. What's matter? *(He really says "Mattuh"; the "r's" are snubbed by these people, but not in the Southern manner. The* CAPTAIN *says "fuh" instead of "for," etc. So do* MRS. FREEHART *and* FRANCIS.*)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(Calling off)* You're goin' t' th' *back* o' the house! Come t' this door *hee*-uh!

CAPTAIN. Who is it?

MRS. FREEHART. Guess he might want to room an' meal. He's got a bag, but it's too early in the season for pedluhs.

CAPTAIN. *I* won't buy nothin' off him.

*(*FRAZEE *appears outside* E.C. *and comes up on the veranda. He is a good looking city business-*

man, in his thirties; rather serious, capable of acting with great determination; a man of no inconsiderable strength. He is dressed as a "city business-man" would dress, of course; but his hat is a soft "town or country hat"; it is too early for him to wear straw. His shoes and the bottoms of his trousers are dusty, and he carries a rather large traveling-bag—not a new one.)

FRAZEE. Is this Captain Olds' place? *(*MRS. FREEHART *gestures towards the* CAPTAIN. FRAZEE *comes toward him.)* Are you the landlord?

CAPTAIN. *(Looking at the bag)* I ain't goin' buy anythin' off o' ye. *(Not offensively, but with a quiet that would never yield.)*

FRAZEE. *(Understanding him, but not smiling)* A Mrs. Frazee is staying here, isn't she?

CAPTAIN. *(Still non-committal)* Mrs. Frazee? Yes, she is. Rooms and meals here.

FRAZEE. I'm Mr. Frazee. I walked over from the station.

CAPTAIN. Oh;—Mrs. Frazee's husband. Goin' to stay some time? You want to double up with Mrs. Frazee?

FRAZEE. *(Setting down his bag)* I'd like a room adjoining hers. I thought as it's so early in the season there'd be no trouble——

CAPTAIN. *(Interrupting)* Seeby'll fix it. Myself I don't 'tend to *de*tails much. I had kind of a *stroke,* fourteenth last October, a little after three in the afternoon.

MRS. FREEHART. *(Impersonally)* Yes. We all have to go some time.

CAPTAIN. *(More testily than when he said this before)* I ain't gone *yet,* please! You go tell Seeby what this gentleman wants, Mrs. Freehart. *(She*

goes out down R. CAPTAIN *stares after her somewhat unfavorably. He explains her to* FRAZEE.) Her, she's cookin' here; name's Mrs. Freehart. Too gabby, too!

FRAZEE. *(Looking about)* I thought perhaps my wife might be somewhere—— *(He turns up.)*

CAPTAIN. She ain't in, an' I'd' know's I could tell you where to find 'er.

FRAZEE. *(A little disappointed)* Oh.

CAPTAIN. Might's well set down. *(*FRAZEE *sits* R. *of table.)* Mrs. Freehart's got to git word to Seeby which room you can have, an' Seeby's gardenin'. Trunk?

FRAZEE. Yes; at the station.

CAPTAIN. Seeby'll have it fetched fer ye. Up to July we run with kind of a light staff—jest Mrs. Freehart and a head bell-boy, or *porter*—as you might call him. The boarders don't thick up, to speak of, not till July. It's nice an' quiet now.

FRAZEE. Yes; that's what Mrs. Frazee heard when she decided to come here. Her nerves had got pretty bad last winter.

CAPTAIN. *(Rather fatuously)* Well, this is good place to rest 'em in. As you *say*, there ain't nothin' to *tax* 'em, so to speak. So far, we ain't had but one other boarder, 'cep'n your wife.

FRAZEE. *(Looking thoughtful)* Only one other. *(Not a question.)* Still here?

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding)* Artist. He was here all last season too—came down from Canada—Canucks, we call 'em—goes outdoors and paints all day long. Everything by hand. *(Not a stressed point, but casual.)*

FRAZEE. I think my wife mentioned there was a young Canadian painter here in one of her earlier letters; I think she mentioned his name—Let me see——

CAPTAIN. Roddy, Mr. Hugh Roddy. These paintin's he makes, sometime they look a good deal like what he makes 'em of. Yessir, you take one of 'em, an' take an' look at it, an' pretty often you can tell just *about* what it's of. *(Pauses.) Sold* a couple of 'em, last year, he *says*. *(Contemplative tone, not pointed on the emphasis;* CAPTAIN *doesn't really doubt the sale. During this speech* FRAZEE *has taken a cigar case from his pocket; he is not sure that smoking is prohibited.)*

FRAZEE. Is it all right to——?

CAPTAIN. Yes; you can smoke here.

FRAZEE. *(Offering the case; rises)* Will you——?

CAPTAIN. *(Taking a cigar)* Thank ye. *(*FRAZEE *strikes a match; he lights the* CAPTAIN'S *and his own cigar.* CAPTAIN *looks at the cigar, saying amiably.)* As you *say*, I guess that's too long a smoke; it's close on time for my nap; I'll jest make it a little one. *(He puts the cigar in his pocket; takes the box from another pocket, selects a stub with some care, and lights it.)* Yes; this Mr. Roddy, the artist, he came in April, this year.

FRAZEE. *(Seeming preoccupied and frowning slightly as he smokes, now glances at* CAPTAIN *and then away)* I'm glad my wife found such a quiet place.

CAPTAIN. Yes? Two-three-four weeks in our climate, that's all anybuddy needs to fix 'em. You cal'late to stay some time?

FRAZEE. I'm not sure. I'm a pretty busy man. *(Cross* L. *to* L. *of table.* CAPTAIN *is now artfully finding out about* FRAZEE.*)*

CAPTAIN. I guess so. In—in some business or other, likely?

FRAZEE. I manufacture machinery for cotton mills. *(Crosses to* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding casually)* That's what I thought;—likely.

FRAZEE. *(Quietly, but preoccupied)* The fact is—— *(Breaks off, then goes on.)* My wife *wrote* me some time ago this place agreed with her, but I wanted to see for myself. I thought I'd just come and——

CAPTAIN. *(Affably)* Natcha'ly, natcha'ly. She —she didn't mention anythin' to us, your comin'.

FRAZEE. *(Smiling)* I didn't find I could get away until yesterday, I thought I'd surprise her. *(Speaks with a little hesitation—though smiling.)*

CAPTAIN. I see.

FRAZEE. You say you think she seems better than when she came? *(Sits in chair* R. *of table.)*

CAPTAIN. Yes; seems so.

FRAZEE. Well, that's rather a relief to me. I'd been worrying a little lately for fear——

CAPTAIN. *(Reassuringly)* Oh, *she's hearty.* Why, some days she goes out all day with this Mr. Roddy; carries heavy bundles for him to use in his paintin'.

FRAZEE. *(Somewhat surprised)* She does, really?

CAPTAIN. *(Still heartily reassuring him and speaking rather rapidly)* She walked six mile, day before yesterday; he was paintin' down at Porpoise Cove, an' she walked three mile there an' three mile back to carry his lunch to him. *(Going on quickly, in the same affable and reassuring tone.)* I dunno *where* they are to-day, but they'll be back soon now. It's gittin' on the afternoon an' they use'ly show up 'bout this time.

FRAZEE. "Usually"? *(He does not point the word at all strongly; but is thoughtful. As he speaks, he rises and goes up, looking off as though thinking he might see his wife. He continues.)* I suppose my wife may have mentioned she'd been

suffering from—ah—depression—before she came here.

CAPTAIN. *(Amused and surprised)* She *was?*

FRAZEE. You say she seems more cheerful?

CAPTAIN. Cheerful? My! Pounds the piana by the hour. *(Then, complacently.)* Mr. Roddy, he's got quite a strong fancy for music.

FRAZEE. *(Halts in turning up, checked by this. He has begun to attach some significance to the* CAPTAIN'S *genuinely artless remark; and he shows this—slightly—by his tone)* He has?

CAPTAIN. My; yes! Guess he'd set f'rever if Mrs. Frazee'd play to him! *(*FRAZEE *turns up and looks off.* MRS. FREEHART *enters down* R.*)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(As she opens the door, addressing* FRAZEE *rapidly in a monotone)* Seeby says tell you she'll have your room ready for you in a jiffy. Francis comin' see about trunk.

*(*FRANCIS *enters down* R. *from behind* MRS. FREEHART. *He is a tanned and weather-beaten, thin, elderly, rather plaintive looking man, gray haired and smooth shaven; he stoops a little and has a thin elderly tenor voice. He wears dusty overalls, dusty heavy shoes, a worn, dust-colored figured shirt, with the sleeves rolled up to the elbow, showing his tanned arms. He wears an old black waistcoat—showing a plated watch-chain—but no coat or hat. As he comes in he has to cross below* MRS. FREEHART*; her back is toward him, and he gives her a hearty slap between the shoulder blades with his left hand. He goes straight on, not even looking at her, and apparently unaware of this action. She also seems unaware of it; and the* CAPTAIN *(*L.C.*) and* FRAZEE *(Up* C.*) looking up again—though he has turned his head for a moment at*

MRS. FREEHART'S *speech—do not see this casual slap.* MRS. FREEHART *goes out down* R., *paying no attention to* FRANCIS. *It should be noted that the* CAPTAIN, MRS. FREEHART *and* FRANCIS *habitually speak rapidly; they do not drawl.)*

FRANCIS. *(As he comes toward* C.*)* Seeby says f' me hitch up the buckboard, fetch a trunk. *(He speaks and looks expressionlessly.)*

CAPTAIN. Then whyn't chu do's she says, Francis?

FRANCIS. Whuzza tickit? *(He means "Where is the ticket" i.e., trunk check.)*

CAPTAIN. *(As his back is toward* FRAZEE *and* FRAZEE'S *back is toward him, he calls)* Hee-uh! see hee-uh! *(*FRAZEE *looks at him and comes down;* CAPTAIN *continuing.) This* is Francis. *(Crosses to* C. FRANCIS'S *name is always spoken in the New England way, the "*A*" half-broad, and the "*I*" short. It should be noted, too, that broad "*A*" is always shortened in words like "father," "car," etc.)* He's the bell-boy, or more like a porter, as you say. Wants your trunk check.

FRAZEE. Oh, yes. *(Gives* FRANCIS *the check and a half-dollar;* FRANCIS *acknowledges the latter by a short expressionless nod, and seems very slightly to chew upon something minute with his front teeth.* FRAZEE *goes on, to* CAPTAIN.*)* Ah—I've been ten hours on the train and if I could go to my room—— *(He speaks tentatively with a gesture toward his bag.)*

FRANCIS. *(With a brief gesture toward* L.*)* She's upstairs puttin' the bed-clo'es on the bed.

FRAZEE. *(A little mystified)* I see.

FRANCIS. She'll fix ye.

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding)* Yes. You see, sense I had my stroke—— *(He speaks the word always*

with a little importance, having really a hint of Mr. Pepy's pride in being "cut for the stone"; and he makes a tiny pause after delivering the word, to give it weight, but this time FRANCIS *takes him up, interrupting before he can go on.)*

FRANCIS. *(With complacency)* Yes, as the sayin' *is;* we all got to go some time.

CAPTAIN. *(Dryly; annoyed)* Yes, an' some mebbe 'fore I do.

FRANCIS. *(Going to* FRAZEE*)* Cap'n's s'prized whole commun'ty. Like my fathuh! *(Father.)* My fathuh had a stroke; then he took an' lingered on us child'en close on sixteen months.

CAPTAIN. *(With an expression of distaste)* You go up t' th' station fetch that trunk. *(*FRAZEE *comes down* L.*)*

FRANCIS. Seeby says wait take his valise up t' his room. She's comin' down hee-uh. *(Sidewise nod of his head to* L. *as he speaks to* FRAZEE.*)* She's gotche fixed. *(Takes suit case.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding reassuringly)* Yes. Seeby'll look after ye.

(The door up L. *opens, and* EUSEBIA OLDS—SEEBY *—enters there. She is only nineteen or twenty, but a responsible watchfulness and gravity of expression—and a slight stoop that comes upon her at times—suggest that she has a great deal to do and much to look out for; that already, in fact, she is rather hard-worked and a little careworn. She is a New England girl; a "State o' Maine" girl of the coast; and she is well enough "educated"—she teaches school in the winter, herself—and she has graduated at the town High School; has had a year at a school in Portland. Her hair is wavy, but is "done" simply; her clothes are good and not "out of style"; but*

are not "smart." She gets fashions, of course, from the magazines. Her present dress is very simple, of a dark material; and she wears an apron. Her voice is charming; as sometimes a Maine coast woman's voice is charming; there are traces sometimes, of the Maine pronunciation and cadence; she always shortens the properly broad "a" for instance, calling the CAPTAIN *"fathuh." She comes in, leaving the door open behind her, as* FRAZEE *and* FRANCIS *are to go out that way. She speaks to* FRANCIS *in a voice very slightly "hushed" or suppressed. She is really excited in a troubled way, but is suppressing it. She gives* FRAZEE *a slight bow, not a quick one, however; looking at him with grave interest.)*

SEEBY. Your room is ready. The—porter will show you. *(She pauses the slightest bit before saying the word "porter" and looks at* FRANCIS, *who goes to the door* L. *with the bag.)*

FRAZEE. *(Starting to follow)* Thanks.

SEEBY. *(In the same voice and with a slight movement to indicate her father)* I'm Miss Olds. The rate for the room is three dollars a day, if you take it by the day. By the week it's eighteen.

FRAZEE. *(*L., *smiling faintly)* I'm not sure just how long I can stay. May I decide that point later?

SEEBY. *(Quietly)* Certainly. *(*FRAZEE *looks at her while* FRANCIS *speaks.)*

FRANCIS. *(Going out up* L.*)* This way.

FRAZEE. *(To* SEEBY*)* Thank you. *(He nods and goes out up* L.*)*

SEEBY. *(Watches him. When he has disappeared from front view she crosses to the open door up* L., *still seeming to look after him. Then she slowly closes the door, and speaks apparently to herself,*

slowly and thoughtfully) So that's *Mr.* Frazee! *(The word "Mister" very slightly stressed.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Has again extinguished the stub of cigar, and though it is now very small, he decides to put it back in the box, and does so as he speaks)* Yes, sir; that's Mr. Frazee. Good man, too—cotton-mill m'sheen'ry. Why, it looks to me; they're nice off. I could tell first time I looked at *her,* she's one them women leads a easy life. Innapenent.

SEEBY. *(Thoughtfully, at table)* Yes—she seems independent. *(She has rested a hand on the table, looking down at it absently; then she looks up.)* She isn't expecting him.

CAPTAIN. *(Cheerfully)* No. He's goin' to give her a surprise.

SEEBY. *(Going up to look off; as if toward* MRS. FRAZEE; *speaks gravely)* I think likely he will. *(In all these speeches she feels and means more than appears on the surface.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Upon a thought, twisting chair)* Hee-uh! Seeby, who told you you might git that Marsile-ya embrawd'ry out my sea-trunk? *(Gesturing to piano.)*

SEEBY. *(Suddenly looking at him sharply and frowning)* Father! *(To back of door for whisk broom. She really says "fathuh.")*

CAPTAIN. *(Surprised)* What?

SEEBY. *(Going toward the "high-boy" but looking at the* CAPTAIN *disapprovingly)* Father, you've been dropping ashes in your lap again. *(Brushes ashes into waste basket.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Slightly querulous)* Well, I didn't want to put 'em on the *floor! (As if putting them on the floor were putting them in the last possible place.)*

SEEBY. *(Gesturing to table as she applies the wisp to him)* But there's the ash-tray. *(Points* L.

right to take a bath if he's a mind to, without it's being called *news!*

SEEBY. They didn't mean anything. *(Concluding with the whisk.)* There! *(With gentle severity.)* *Did* you spill any on the floor?

CAPTAIN. *(Briefly)* N' I didn't. *(As she goes with the whisk back to the "high-boy" he continues querulously.)* I was readin' a *magazine* where it says th' young folks nowadays have got all so bold; they don't respeck their parents an' th' Bible. Bold; that's what they are.

SEEBY. *(Brings some sewing from the door; thoughtfully, closing the drawer)* I *would* like to be a little bold, if I had time and knew how. *(*CAPTAIN *grunts and shakes his head; as* FRANCIS *enters up* L.*)*

FRANCIS. *(As he enters, referring to upstairs* L.*)* He's goin' take a bath. *(In "bath" he uses a rather broad "a"—not quite "ah," however.)*

SEEBY. *(Getting some sewing—napkins she is hemming, from another drawer of the "high-boy")* Close the door, Francis. Always close 'em behind you. *(Patiently, but a little like a school teacher.)* And remember to open his trunk for him when you bring it.

FRANCIS. *(Closing the door and going up)* I'll rememb'r it, Seeby. I *already* remembered t' open 'is valise for 'im. He seemed t' *'preciate* it, too. *(Exit cheerfully* C. *to* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. H'm. *(A ruminative sound.)* Awed, too! *(He means "odd.")*

SEEBY. *(Sewing)* What's odd, Father?

CAPTAIN. This Mr. Frazee. Told *me* he was frettin' 'count of his woman.

SEEBY. *(Looking at him quickly)* About Mrs. Frazee?

CAPTAIN. Yes. 'Bout her health.

SEEBY. *(As if somewhat incredulous)* About her health?

CAPTAIN. Yes—and her the very *picture* of it! An' I *told* 'im so, so I told him!

SEEBY. *(Looking again at her work, speaks without emphasis)* No. I don't think he need fret about that. *(She feels, however, that he might fret about other things.)*

CAPTAIN. She might 'a' looked kind o' peaked the first two-three days after she come—but I *told* him, "By Glory," I says, "she's *strong;* why, she can walk six or eight or ten miles any day and carry this here artist's lunch or his paints for him," I says. *(*CAPTAIN *implies nothing.)*

SEEBY. *(Looking at him)* You did? Did you tell Mr. Frazee that, father? *(Very slight emphasis on "that.")*

CAPTAIN. *(Fretfully)* Yes did. Whatche peckin' at me for *now?* Any reason I shouldn't tell a man how well his wife's lookin'?

SEEBY. *(Slowly)* No. I guess it's just as well.

CAPTAIN. *(Pettishly—almost childishly)* Always tryin' to make out I done somethin' out the way!

SEEBY. *(Gently, but casually, as this happens frequently and she is used to it)* No, no.

CAPTAIN. *(Insisting feebly)* You do. Always tryin' to make me out a goob! You do, Seeby. Had eight childern an' *you* had to be the only one to live! *(He sniffs.)*

SEEBY. *(At a thought)* What time is it, father?

CAPTAIN. *(Looking at his watch)* It's twenty before six. *(His voice is plaintively reproachful, and he sniffs again.)*

SEEBY. *(Getting up and putting her sewing on the table by the sofa* R.C., *speaks quietly; patience in her voice)* That's what's the matter with you. *(She*

hears something outdoors—rises.) You're late for your nap before supper.

CAPTAIN. *(Peevish, almost whimpering)* No, I doe' *want* to go yet. Ain't that Mrs. Frazee an' Mr. Roddy comin' home out yon? I can *hear* 'em. *(Laughter is heard at a distance.)*

SEEBY. *(About to push his chair)* Yes, they're coming. So you'd better——

CAPTAIN. *(Like a wilful child)* *I* want to be the one to tell her husband's hee-uh.

SEEBY. *(Seriously, quickly)* No. You mustn't.

CAPTAIN. Why not?

SEEBY. He said *he* wanted to surprise her, didn't he?

CAPTAIN. Well, I want——

SEEBY. *(Seriously)* No; you mustn't mention it.

CAPTAIN. *(Pettishly; childishly)* Oh, pshaw! *(This dialogue has been rapid.)*

SEEBY. You mustn't.

(The laughter outside, not noisy, is of two people, a man and a woman; it becomes a little louder and RODDY *and* CLARA *(*MRS. FRAZEE*) rush in* C.E., RODDY *appearing first. He is a finely handsome, healthy young man; about twenty-six; graceful, nervous, "temperamental" and "high strung"; quick in change of extreme moods. He has no outward sign of being an "artist": his hair is not long; his soft collar is conventional—though rather wilted now; he wears knickerbockers; his shoes and stockings are dusty; his shirt is not just from a dressing-case. His sleeves are rolled up; his coat is over his arm; his cap in his trouser's pocket. He carries a fair-sized stretched canvas; a scraped palette; a folding easel (an old one); a large*

tin paint box. About his neck is a chain of daisies. CLARA *is an extremely handsome woman of twenty-four or twenty-five; she is of a fine, "highbred," type; and she also is "temperamental." She is tall, graceful, of a "fine figure," and "attractive." She wears a short "sport skirt," tall walking-boots, a shirt-waist with the sleeves rolled up; a "sport hat"; her shoes, stockings and skirt are dusty; there is a "daisy chain" about her throat. She carries an old camp-stool and a lunch basket now full of wild flowers. Both she and* RODDY *have the appearance of persons who have been picnicing in the open all day. They are flushed, healthy, and in the liveliest spirits—as ready to laugh as happy children. They come on with a rush, laughing.* RODDY *comes first, pretending a flight.* CLARA *runs after him pelting him wtih handfuls of buttercups and daisies which he pretends to dodge.* SEEBY *at once leaves the* CAPTAIN R.C. *—she has been wheeling him to* R.E.*—and hurries, silently, to pick up the raining flowers.* RODDY *dodges to* R. *then* L. *where* CLARA *pushes him into a chair and puts daisies in his hair. All this while, she is laughing and reproaching him. ("You story-teller! I never knew such an insulting villain!" ad lib.) And he, laughing, is protesting: ("It's the truth! I can't help telling the truth, can I? You were scared. You know you were! You can't deny it. Look out for the paint!" ad lib.) He brushes off the daisies she puts in his hair.* SEEBY, *on her knees, picks them up as rapidly as possible.)*

CLARA. *(Leaving him, goes to sofa as if merrily exhausted; drops upon it; speech during this action)*

I never knew such a man! Captain Olds, he accused me of being afraid of your *geese* down that lane!

RODDY. *(Rising to put his canvas against the piano. Dry side out)* She was! Why, Captain, she fairly *clung* to me! For protection, she *said! (Arranging his other things on the floor by the canvas.)*

CLARA. What a *boast!* Miss Olds, do you believe him?

SEEBY. *(On her knees, picking up the flowers)* I da' know.

CLARA. *(Puts flower basket on table)* Captain Olds, if any lady ever clung to *you,* for protection, or any other reason, you didn't go about *boasting* of it, did you?

CAPTAIN. *(In a fretful aged voice)* Me? I wan'd a-tell ye, but Seeby says not to. They's a surprise comin'——

SEEBY. *(Jumping up)* Father! *(To the others.)* Strawb'ry short-cake for supper; *it'll* be a surprise if Mrs. Freehart doesn't spoil it! *(Going* R., *she drops the flowers in a waste-basket under the table* R.C.*)*

CAPTAIN. I mean to tell ye——

SEEBY. *(Taking hold of the chair back)* Yes, father; we know. *(To the others, explaining quietly.)* He's been getting fretful because he passed the time for his nap. *(Pushing him out up* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. I want to tell her about——

SEEBY. Yes, father. We know. We *know! (She closes the door after her.)*

RODDY. *(Crosses to sofa)* What a day! What a noble old day we've had!

CLARA. *(Impulsively)* Let me try to tell it! *(She runs to the piano.)* Let me see if I can get what it was like. *(She dashes off a thumping im-*

provization; a run of melody and chords most exultant and ebullient.)

RODDY. *(Standing still, his eyes sparkling)* By George! That's it! Fields o' buttercups and daisies! Sky laughing like a girl with the devil in her and afraid of geese!

CLARA. *(More gravely)* Yes; you and I were out *in* that sky, weren't we? Perhaps I can—— *(Her music becomes tender and caressing—a love strain.)*

RODDY. *(Softly)* By George! Yes. *(Crosses to her.)* There *was* something of that in it, too—for you and me. Yes; you're telling it. *(He turns up, halts and asks huskily.)* Do you ever improvise like that—for anybody else?

CLARA. *(Still playing, but very softly)* I don't think so. I don't believe—I could.

RODDY. I hope not. I'd hate to think——

CLARA. *(As he pauses, she stops playing)* Hate to think what?

RODDY. I'd hate to think any other—— *(He stops. She nods.)*

CLARA. I know. *(She plays again.)*

RODDY. *(Above piano)* "Had I lain for a century dead, my dust would hear that and beat——" *(Crosses to piano.)* I think I'd hear it and come *back* if you played near *my* cemetery!

CLARA. *(Music stops)* Would you?

RODDY. My Lord! what your playing *is* to me! *(Goes L. again.)*

CLARA. Only my—playing?

RODDY. *(As they both laugh rather tremulously; he moves back)* Don't those first few days after you came here seem funny, to look back on?

CLARA. Yes—I hardly noticed you! *(She laughs and shakes her head.)* I had an idea you were rather interested in—in Miss Eusebia Olds! *(Speaks*

the names drolly; laughs and chants with piano.) "Oh, you must be in love with the landlord's daughter or you'll never get a second piece of pie!" *(Then she plays seriously again.)*

RODDY. *(Crosses to* C. *Frowning, speaks rapidly)* This is what I've wanted all my life—a woman's mood making *my* mood—and in *music*—when I get in the depths——

CLARA. *(Coming from the piano)* Well, I get in the depths, too, Hugh. *(Both are very serious.)*

RODDY. *(Earnestly)* Everybody does that's got Art in them! We're *both* nothing but Art!

CLARA. *(Smiling faintly)* Really, we are just alike, aren't we?

RODDY. Yes. You're stung by the ugly spots in life just the way I am; it's a kind of agony to be as sensitive to color as I am!

CLARA. Yes. I have that, too.

RODDY. There are things that *kill* me! *(Walking about* R.*)* And they're everywhere—you *never* get away from 'em. Look at this damnable *room,* for instance!

CLARA. Yes. Almost all rooms everywhere, are bad.

RODDY. *(Walking about almost passionately)* I tried to show her last year how it ought to be; she said she'd have it "right" when I came this spring—and look at it! Even the chintz isn't the shade I told her! *(Almost vehement on this.)*

CLARA. *(*C. *Looking at him)* But there was *one* thing here that wasn't so bad, wasn't there?

RODDY. Not till *you* came!

CLARA. *(Smiling and biting her lip)* That's what I meant.

RODDY. *(Crosses to her. Coming out of the dumps, smiling)* You *do* charm a man!

CLARA. How long?

RODDY. *(Taking her hands)* Oh, it mustn't ever *stop! (As in a half-laughing alarm.)*

CLARA. No. It mustn't.

RODDY. *(Again suddenly very grave; with great feeling)* I don't think I could stand it.

CLARA. *(Speaking for herself and half-turning her head away)* Are you sure? *(Then they look at each other with solemnity. He still has her hands.)*

*(*SEEBY *enters quietly up* R., *making no sign that she is aware of them, going to the sofa* R.C. CLARA *sees her and detaches her hands from* RODDY'S; *he looks inquiringly at* CLARA, *who becomes formal in expression; he glances round; sees* SEEBY, *who seats herself on the sofa and, without looking at them, picks up her sewing. He is annoyed and embarrassed but tries to show neither feeling; clears his throat—not markedly—and passes his hand over his face.* CLARA *turns up, rather slowly, after a short, cold, comprehending glance at* SEEBY.*)*

CLARA. Ah—I think I really ought to be changing my dress.

SEEBY. *(Quietly; seeming to concentrate on her sewing)* Was she playing the piano for you?

RODDY. *(Not quite at ease)* Why——

CLARA. *(Very slightly—and not openly—showing annoyance)* Yes; I was playing.

SEEBY. *(Giving an instant's fleet, frightened wistful, sidelong glance at* RODDY, *who is not far* L. *of her. And then looking back at sewing in which her hands—having paused an instant for this look—are again moving; she speaks quietly, her face composed; but there is the thousandth part of a tremble in her voice and the least tremble to her hands)* I—never did—sing for you, did I?

RODDY. *(Somewhat surprised)* Why, no.

SEEBY. I will, some time soon. I sing—right well. Francis plays the guitar and he sings and I sing too. *(She swallows.)* We'll do it for you any time you like.

RODDY. *(Still surprised, but not enthusiastic. He is polite, however)* Thank you; I'll be glad to hear you. *(To* CLARA *who has turned down toward* R.E.*)* Are you going? *(Moving toward her.)* Would it be too much to ask——

CLARA. What?

RODDY. If you *could* play that second part again? There are times when one just *has* to hear certain things right *then.* Could you?

CLARA. I think I can. *(She goes to the piano and repeats the love motive of her improvization.* SEEBY'S *sewing slowly droops to her lap; she turns her head slowly, her eyes resting upon* RODDY *until he moves toward the piano; then she looks out before her again.* CLARA *stops playing; there is a moment's silence; then* SEEBY *begins to sew and speaks rather slowly and with slight expression but quite distinctly—her tone is not openly hostile, however.)*

SEEBY. That music sounds as if it meant something about love. I mean a certain kind of love.

CLARA. Oh?

SEEBY. We been taking summer people here since I was five years old, and of course there isn't any place where you see as many kinds of love as a summer boarding-house. *(They stare at her. Then, after a moment's pause.)*

CLARA. *(Quietly, but a little tensely in her annoyance)* What kind of love did my playing remind you of?

SEEBY. *(With the same manner as before; nearly a patient monotone)* The kind most of it is.

CLARA. Indeed?

SEEBY. Mostly, there's only one thing they care about in the person they're in love with—it's *that* person's getting excited about *them.* *(*CLARA, *after a moment, rather impatiently strikes a chord or two.)*

RODDY. *(To her)* Please go on. *(*SEEBY *glances round at them as* CLARA *again begins to play.* RODDY *leans on the piano—lover-like, looking at* CLARA.*)*

SEEBY. *(Sewing, draws a deep breath, but does not look round as she speaks)* I guess it's time to mention—Mr. Frazee's here.

CLARA. *(Her hands striking the keys uncertainly as she stops playing)* What! *(She rises trembling, drops down.)*

RODDY. *(Crosses* L.C. *Sharply, to* SEEBY*)* What did you say?

SEEBY. Mr. Frazee came this afternoon. It's he you can hear coming downstairs now.

RODDY. *(Agitated, turning swiftly to* CLARA*)* You didn't—— *(He would finish by saying "tell me he was coming," but* SEEBY *interrupts.)*

SEEBY. *(With a slight gesture to* L.*)* He's just going to open the door. *(She speaks quickly, but in the tones of "hushed" patience. It is the way a tired and tried but self-contained mother would warn unruly children that a not-to-be-trifled-with father is almost upon them.)*

*(*FRAZEE *enters* L. *He has changed his clothes for a gray flannel suit, and looks freshened; but he is serious.* CLARA *has not recovered from the shock of* SEEBY'S *announcement that* FRAZEE *is in the house. She has not, indeed, quite realized that he is really there—until she has seen him. She tries out his name in a voice that could be interpreted as one of dismay, though it is definitely nothing more than emotional.)*

FRAZEE. *(As he comes in)* Clara——

CLARA. Why—*Henry! (There is a moment's pause.* RODDY *and* CLARA *stare at* FRAZEE, *who gives a quick glance from* CLARA *to* RODDY, *then looks at* CLARA *again; and steps quickly toward her. She comes to meet him, trying to recover herself and partly succeeding. This is a very short pause before she is able to add, after calling his name.)* Why, when did you get here? *(As they meet, he starts but she can't quite do it, and it is her swiftly turned cheek that he kisses. He is aware of a significance in this, but recovers himself and speaks quickly enough.)*

FRAZEE. I found yesterday I could break away for a while. Miss—*(He glances briefly toward* SEEBY.*)*—Miss Olds has given me the room adjoining *yours. (Crosses* R.*)*

CLARA. *(With a glance at* SEEBY*)* Oh, yes—*(With an instant's tendency to bite her lip.)*—that's very—convenient. This is—Mr. Roddy. *(She is a little awkward.* RODDY *nods, murmuring indistinctly.)*

FRAZEE. *(With* CLARA*; he nods gravely)* Howdyado. I think Captain Olds mentioned your staying here?

RODDY. *(He speaks quickly as if he were going to say something more but adds only)* —I am.

CLARA. *(Nervously trying to be "natural" though she accomplishes this with difficulty)* I've been on —quite a tramp, Henry. Do you mind waiting here till I—dress? *(Slightest stress on "here." She feels she must get away quickly.)*

FRAZEE. All right.

CLARA. *(Rather breathless in a low voice)* I won't be very long. *(Exit up* L. *quickly. Shut door.)*

RODDY. *(Crosses behind table. A little more at his ease, though still dazed, going* L.*)* Aw—I think

I'd—better be freshening up—too. *(Crossing to* L.*)* I'll—I'll see you at supper, no doubt. *(As he goes he breaks the daisy chain round his neck; part drops to the floor; the rest he crumples in his hand.* FRAZEE *notes it.)*

FRAZEE. Yes; no doubt.

*(*RODDY *hastily picks up some of his traps* L. *in passing, and makes a quick and nervous exit down* L. FRAZEE *stands looking after him, then looks rather sharply at* SEEBY, *who seems fixedly intent upon her work, though the sewing goes very slowly.* FRAZEE *turns up, then comes down again; and moodily stirs with his shoe the string of daisies dropped by* RODDY. SEEBY *notes this and at once comes and picks the flowers up.)*

SEEBY. *(As she does so)* I thought I'd picked 'em all up. I guess these must have dropped from the daisy necklace Mrs. Frazee had round her neck.

FRAZEE. No. They dropped from the daisy necklace Mr. Roddy had around *his* neck.

SEEBY. Oh! *(Returns to sofa.)*

FRAZEE. *(After a pause, looks at the canvas leaning against the wall. He speaks without looking at* SEEBY*)* Mr. Roddy seems to have forgotten to take his picture with him. *(He is about to look at it, putting his hand upon the top.)*

SEEBY. *(Quietly, gently, facing front again after a glance at him)* You—you mustn't look at it, please.

FRAZEE. No?

SEEBY. He doesn't like it when they're only part done. He likes you to look at 'em a long *while* when they're finished—but not till then. He won't let anybody.

FRAZEE. But if my wife is with him while he's painting, *she* must——

SEEBY. Yes—but nobody else. He won't let me. *(The tremble is again almost inaudible in her voice.)*

FRAZEE. *(Letting the canvas again recline against the wall without looking at it, turns from it, speaks thoughtfully, preoccupied)* I see. Ah—I suppose I shouldn't know much more about it if I looked at it. I'm a business man; I don't know much about painting—or about painters. I suppose he does very fine work. *(Half questioning, half affirming.)*

SEEBY. *(Sewing quietly)* No. It isn't very good.

FRAZEE. *(Rather puzzled)* You—you know about painting?

SEEBY. We had two painters stay here one summer; you could tell they were men that always *knew* just what they were *doing*. And when they were painting, so could anybody *else* tell what they were doing. A good deal of the time you can't tell what Mr. Roddy's been doing, even after he's finished.

LIGHTS START

FRAZEE. *(After a pause)* Then—ah—my—wife doesn't think he's a very good painter? *(Puts chair* L. *of* SEEBY.*)*

SEEBY. *(A little disturbed)* I couldn't say. *He* believes he is.

FRAZEE. But he's not? *(An affirmative question, meaning: "But you say he's not.")*

SEEBY. *(Gently, with a slow, short shake of the head)* He might be some day. He isn't now.

FRAZEE. *(*L.C. *Sits, observing her)* But you think probably my wife believes he is? *(He assumes as light a tone as he can.)*

SEEBY. *(Quietly, but a little jerkily; otherwise expressionless)* They talk—about—Art.

FRAZEE. *(Simply)* What do they say about it?

SEEBY. *(Thoughtfully)* Well, it doesn't amount to much, to listen to.

FRAZEE. I suppose there isn't a great deal to do here in the evenings—*except* talk?

SEEBY. And play the piano.

FRAZEE. *(Frowning with the difficulty of saying it "naturally")* I suppose Mrs. Frazee usually sits in here in the evenings?

SEEBY. Yes. Or on the porch. There's not much place else to go.

FRAZEE. *(Frowning again for the same reason)* I suppose—ah—you and Captain Olds are here, too, then, most of the time.

SEEBY. *(Looking at him)* I am. *(Very faint stress on "I." Looks front again; adding in a low, casual voice.)* —And Mr. Roddy. *(Adding this as though there might be significance in not adding it.)*

FRAZEE. *(More briskly but with no apparent pointing)* Oh, yes. And Mr. Roddy, of course.

SEEBY. Sometimes we walk down to the beach in the moonlight.

FRAZEE. Uh—you mean you—and Mr. Roddy and my wife? *(He always pauses infinitesimally, almost imperceptibly, before the word "wife.")*

SEEBY. Yes. I go—too. *(This is of course a conversation of under-currents; the meanings are not strongly pointed, but are apparent enough.)*

FRAZEE. *(As if lightly)* And then do they talk about—Art?

SEEBY. *(As if absently)* Yes; and things.

FRAZEE. *(In a matter-of-fact tone)* I see. *(Getting up and speaking more briskly.)* I think you must have a pretty good climate here, Miss Olds.

SEEBY. Yes; she looks a different woman from when she came, Mr. Frazee.

FRAZEE. *(Going up as though to look at the sea.*

A late afternoon light is outdoors now, a rosy amber) She does indeed! *(This as though quite heartily, but there is a hidden grimness under it.)*

SEEBY. When she first came she didn't seem to take any interest in anything; but now——

FRAZEE. *(As if amusedly indulgent)* But now she takes an interest particularly in Art, I suppose.

SEEBY. *(Secretly disturbed; a little breathlessly)* Oh, no. *(She rises.)* In everything. *(She has not meant to tell him as much as she has told him.)*

FRAZEE. So?

READY LIGHTS TO CHANGE

*(*RODDY *enters down* L., *leaving the door open. He has changed to another coat, white trousers, etc.* SEEBY *speaks as he enters.)*

SEEBY *(Pointing to the canvas)* You left your picture. *(*RODDY *and* FRAZEE *give each other a brief glance; then* RODDY *replies to* SEEBY.*)*

RODDY. *(With faint sarcasm, yet not ill-naturedly)* My cluttering-up ways are painful to the New England mind, I know. I'll——*(Picking up the canvas.)*

SEEBY. *(Hurriedly, in an undertone)* Could you wait a minute? *(She wants to say something to him; over to him and up* L. *She sees* FRANCIS *coming.* RODDY *pauses down* L., *about to go out, looking at* SEEBY. FRANCIS *enters up* L., *speaking as he does so.)*

FRANCIS. *(Speaking to* SEEBY*)* Tuck it up th' back way. Wife's dressin' in *her* room; called through the doo-uh *(door)* she d' know where he wants to put it in *his* room.

SEEBY. *(To* FRAZEE, *who is up* C.*)* It's about

your trunk. *(She leaves her sewing on the table,* R.C.*)*

FRAZEE. *(Coming down)* I'll come and show you.

FRANCIS. I'll *open* it fuh ye, too. *Be glad* to.

FRAZEE. *(Frowning, as they go out up* L.*)* If I can find the key. *(They close the door.)*

LIGHTS CHANGE

*(*SEEBY *steps toward* RODDY; *halts—has the impulse to speak; bites her lip, and is silent, troubled.)*

RODDY. What'd you want to see me about? What's the matter? *(He is careless with his canvas.)*

SEEBY. Look out! Don't get paint on your clothes and spoil 'em!

RODDY. Don't you think it's more important not to spoil my picture?

SEEBY. But you can *easily* make a new picture.

RODDY. And I can't easily get new clothes; I'm aware of that, unfortunately. But that isn't what you wanted to see me about?

SEEBY. Well, I don't know just how to say it.

RODDY. *(A little sharply)* Why?

SEEBY. *(With a troubled sound like laughter)* I'm afraid it'll make you like me worse than you've already been getting to—lately—Mr. Roddy.

RODDY. *(With some indulgence, yet rather impatiently; putting the canvas down)* Oh, what would I "like you worse" for? *(His manner is, in general, that of an adult toward a child, or inferior, who is sometimes amusing, but sometimes annoying.)*

SEEBY. I—I know—lately—you think a good many things I do aren't just the place of a person that runs a boarding house, but—— *(She stops.)*

RODDY. *(Quietly)* Oh, no! What is it?

SEEBY. Well—I wanted—— *(Breaks off.)* Mr. Frazee was just talking to me—— *(Pauses.)*

RODDY. *(Glancing at her)* Was he? *(Speaks casually.)*

SEEBY. He's been worried about his wife. When she first came she wrote him pretty often; but lately he hasn't heard from her at *all*.

RODDY. *(Surprised, frowning)* Did he tell you that?

SEEBY. Oh, no.

RODDY. *(Lightly satirical, but as if indulgent)* Oh, you look to *see* who she writes to?

SEEBY. *(Gently)* Why, I carry the mail to post. She hasn't given me *any* letters for over ten days. I couldn't help knowing that, could I, Mr. Roddy?

RODDY. *(A little bored)* Well, what of it?

SEEBY. *(Swallowing)* Well, he's still uneasy about her, but since he got here—it isn't about her health.

RODDY. *(Smiling faintly)* He seems to have taken you into his confidence, Eusebia!

SEEBY. He didn't. He didn't know I understood what he was really asking me about?

RODDY. What *was* it about?

SEEBY. It was about—you—Mr. Roddy.

RODDY. *(Affecting a laugh, tossing off what she tells him)* Oh!

SEEBY. Yes. *(She turns away from him; sits on sofa* R.*)*

RODDY. *(Laughing)* He must take sudden interest in people! *(Stops laughing.)* Well, go on. Tell me what you wanted to.

SEEBY. *(Having resumed her sewing)* I think I—have.

RODDY. What? *(Meaning "How foolish to think you've told me anything at all!")*

SEEBY. I think you know I have.

RODDY. *(Laughing a little uneasily)* Of all the foolishness! Mr. Frazee hasn't any reason to take any interest in *me! (He crosses* L. *She lights lights.)*

SEEBY. Well—I've told you. *(She has warned him and done her best.)*

RODDY. *(As if about to go out* R., *halts at a thought)* By the way—when we first came in this afternoon—why didn't you *mention* that Mrs. Frazee's husband was here?

SEEBY. Why didn't I tell you right away?

RODDY. Why didn't you tell *her* right away? *(He crosses* R. *to her.)*

SEEBY. *(Thoughtful, slowly)* Well—he wanted to make it a surprise. I was going to let him—but finally—I thought it might be too much of one. *(After a moment.)* And it was, anyhow!

RODDY. *(Rather sharply and nervously)* Why?

SEEBY. *(Troubled)* Why, you couldn't either of you manage to look—natural!

RODDY. *(Impatiently)* Oh, good gracious, what nonsense! *(He starts as if to go out, but again halts as she speaks. She has let her sewing rest on the sofa beside her, her hand resting on it. She speaks impulsively—yet with the expression of troubled reverie. She doesn't look at him.)*

SEEBY. I was just thinking—I made a mistake.

RODDY. *(Smiling in rather troubled satire)* Yes; I think you have!

SEEBY. I mean when I told him you wouldn't let anybody see your pictures before they're finished —except his wife.

RODDY. *(Staring at her)* Oh, you told him that? *(He crosses* R. *to her.)*

SEEBY. *(Troubled)* I don't know how I happened to.

RODDY. *(With some vehemence)* Good gracious! She sees 'em because she's *with* me while I'm painting——

SEEBY. Yes! *(Meaning "Indeed she is"!)*

RODDY. *(Going on rapidly)* And because she understands what I'm doing——

SEEBY. Does she say so?

RODDY. *(Sharply)* She *does* understand! Good heavens, I don't know just why I seem to be explaining such things to *you,* Miss Olds! *(With a worried laugh.)*

SEEBY. *(Rising)* No. You feel it isn't my place for you to.

RODDY. *(Sharply; quickly)* I don't mean that. I'm an artist; I don't know anything about caste distinctions. You looked at an unfinished picture of mine last summer and *God* knows what you said about it *I've* tried to forget!

SEEBY. *(Swallowing)* Well, I didn't know that part of it was meant for water.

RODDY. Don't tell me *again! (Walking up and down as he speaks.)* If I listened to what you'd say of my work I'd never paint any more! You don't know what even ignorant criticism does to *any* kind of artist! It just destroys!

SEEBY. Everything I say is ignorant?

RODDY. About *Art, yes!* Look what you did with this room!

SEEBY. It's wrong?

RODDY. It's awful!

SEEBY. I did what you said. *(Blurs "you.")*

RODDY. I told you to get *originals.* I *hate* reproductions. Look at that "high-boy," from Grand Rapids!

SEEBY. Aren't any more old ones. Father sold out ours before I was born.

RODDY. Then do without *any.*

SEEBY. You said you put a high-boy there.

RODDY. Oh, yes, I know, but I meant—— *(Crosses* L. *to her. She turns away, her face not seen.)*

*(*MRS. FREEHART *enters* L.*)*

MRS. FREEHART. Goin' look see if table's set right f' suppah?

SEEBY. I'm coming. *(Exit* MRS. FREEHART, L. *The* CAPTAIN'S *bell is heard* L., *and a thumping on the floor with a stick.)* Oh!

RODDY. *(More kindly)* That's your father wants to be taken up from his nap. Let me get him in his chair while you see to the table. I'll bring him out.

SEEBY. *(Turns; her lips trembling)* Thank you, I'll be much obliged. He likes you, Mr. Roddy. *(Crosses to door.)*

RODDY. *(Troubled)* I'm afraid *you* don't. I—I hadn't meant ever to say anything at all about the room——

SEEBY. Yes. You never did say anything about it until just now, so I felt all along you—didn't like it.

RODDY. Well, I needn't have said so the way I did just now. Sometimes I seem to have fits; I know I'm queer.

SEEBY. *(Looking up at him gravely)* Then, maybe——

RODDY. *(Frowning)* Maybe what?

SEEBY. Maybe you *will* be—*(Swallowing.)*—a great painter some time. *(Exits down* R.*)*

RODDY. *(Stands looking after her.* CAPTAIN'S *bell and thumping are heard off up* R.*)* Coming, Cap'n! *(Goes up* R.*)*

*(*FRANCIS *enters up* L., *with chisel and pincers in his hand.)*

FRANCIS. *(Crossing)* After I had to bust the lock to open his trunk, he found the key in his *travel-in'*-pants. Either he's absent-minded or he's *studyin'* 'bout somethin'! Had a nice *talk* with him though. *(Bell rings and stick thumps again.* RODDY *exits up* R. *At the same moment* FRAZEE *enters up* L.*)*

FRAZEE. *(As he comes in)* Is that the bell for dinner?

FRANCIS. *(Going up to open door up* L.*)* F' supp-uh? No. That's the Cap'n. Wants to be put in his chair an' fotched out.

FRAZEE. *(Going up)* I see.

*(*CLARA *enters up* L. *She wears a becoming, but quite simple evening dress, very little jewelry. She looks rather tense and emotional, but tries to conceal this.)*

CLARA. *(Trying to speak cheerfully, as she enters and closes door)* Oh, you're down *again,* are you?

FRAZEE. *(Coming near her, rather grimly)* It's my impression you kept your door locked till you *knew* I was!

CLARA. *(Breathless, frightened)* Why, what in the world——

FRAZEE. *(In low tone) Don't—act! (They stare at each other, she drawing away from him, as* RODDY'S *voice is heard off, just outside door up* L.*)*

CLARA. *(With partially suppressed resentment, and some apprehension)* Did you have to ride in a day-coach all the way up here, Henry?

FRAZEE. No.

CLARA. I thought perhaps you'd had an uncomfortable trip. Forgive me if I'm too stupid to under-

stand any other reason for your being in a temper.

FRAZEE. Yes, it does seem ill-tempered of me to come up here and break the chains.

CLARA. "Chains?" I'm glad you *do* see my life in that light, Henry!

FRAZEE. No. I meant—*daisy* chains!

CLARA. What? "Daisy chains?" *(Laughing uncomfortably, as in derision)* Is it really possible you mean poor Mr. Roddy? Good gracious!

FRAZEE. *(Sharply)* Yes! Even the *remotest* suspicion of such a thing is absurd, isn't it?

CLARA. *(Sharply)* It would be insulting, of course, if it *weren't* absurd!

FRAZEE. And your "poor Mr. Roddy" hasn't a thought in the world for anything but this painting.

CLARA. I didn't say that.

FRAZEE. Oh, he *has* other thoughts? Yes, I've *heard* art people were usually involved—in "sentiment!"

CLARA. Well, his "sentiment" isn't about *me!*

FRAZEE. Oh, he has one, but not about *you?* He isn't staying here on your account?

CLARA. Staying *here* on my account!

FRAZEE. You say he's not?

CLARA. *(Seeing the way out)* Staying *here* for *me?* Why, haven't you any *eyes,* Henry? *(She begins to be relieved.)*

FRAZEE. Yes.

CLARA. Then you'd better put them to use. Mr. Roddy was here *last* season, *too.*

FRAZEE. Yes. *That's* true.

CLARA. Then on whose account do you suppose he's here now?

FRAZEE. What?

CLARA. Why, Eusebia Olds; *certainly!*

FRAZEE. Oh, I see. You play only the part of chaperone for Miss Olds and Mr. Roddy?

CLARA. In a way, yes. *(He grunts, and they stare at each other.)*

WARN DINNER BELL

RODDY. *(Off, outside door up* L.*)* Cheerio, Cap'n! *(*FRANCIS *opens the door and* RODDY, *smiling, wheels* CAPTAIN OLDS *out, saying heartily.)* "Thar she blows," Cap'n! Grog all hands around!

CAPTAIN. Has he got the light a-winkin' yet? Is she *lit? (*CAPTAIN *has worn his cap until previous exit; now he is bareheaded.)*

FRANCIS. *(Up, looking off; it has grown ruddy outside, and dusk is coming)* Yes, Cap'n; he's got her goin'.

CAPTAIN. Wheel me out to git my look at her; wheel me out. *(*RODDY *starts to* C.E. *with him, pausing to explain to* FRAZEE.*)*

RODDY. It's the light-house on Porpoise Island. The Cap'n likes to look at it every evening.

WARN CURTAIN

CAPTAIN. Saved my ship once, that light did. 'Cept'n' when my *stroke* come I ain't missed lookin' at her from out yon a night in eighteen year, 'less there was fog. *(*RODDY *wheels him out on the veranda.)* I sh'd fear I'd have some bad luck if I missed her.

FRANCIS. *(On the veranda, pointing off* L.*)* There she is a-winkin', Cap'n.

CAPTAIN. Hee-uh! Mr. Frazee, you won't see no such sights as this in the city. Come hee-uh an' take a look at her. *(*FRAZEE *goes up.* CAPTAIN *points off* L., *explaining.)* That's seven full sea-mile off shore.

FRANCIS. Yes, she be! *(*RODDY, *binocular busi-*

ness.) If you'd look over beyond, Mr. Frazee, you kin see Big Goat with you eye naked.

CAPTAIN. *(Testily)* Mr. Frazee don't care about seein' Big Goat.

FRANCIS. Yes, he does, too; you see, Mr. Frazee, Big Goat's the reef Cap'n Olds stuck his last ship on when he was bringing her in.

CAPTAIN. I got her off, didn't I?

FRANCIS. *(Innocently)* Yes, you and two, three government tugs got her off nice. *(Urging* FRAZEE.*)* Here, Mr. Frazee——

CAPTAIN. *(Crossly)* Mr. Frazee don't take no interest in reefs.

FRANCIS. Why, *everybody* does in *that* un, 'count o' the time you hung up there. First step over here, Mr. Frazee, and you can see it; lemme show you, Mr. Frazee. *(He moves to* R. *with* FRAZEE, *leaving the* CAPTAIN *grumbling and muttering.* RODDY, *after a glance at* FRAZEE, *comes quickly down to* CLARA.*)*

CAPTAIN. Damn ninny!

FRAZEE. The light-house is built on rather a small rock, isn't it? Looks lonely.

FRANCIS. 'Tis a mite *unsociable* out there.

RODDY. *(Near* CLARA*)* Yes; "seven full sea-mile off shore," it is—a "mite."

FRAZEE. "Seven full sea-miles?" I suppose you've been out there often, Mr. Roddy?

RODDY. Oh, yes; quite often.

CAPTAIN. Him? Why, him and Mrs. Frazee, they took and pulled all the way out there in a row-boat, only last Sunday.

FRAZEE. Only last Sunday!

CLARA. Oh, yes, and we had a lovely time; it's one of Mr. Roddy's favorite places, isn't it?

RODDY. *(Puzzled)* Yes, indeed.

BELL READY

CLARA. How many times have you been there with Miss *Olds,* Mr. Roddy?

RODDY. *(Puzzled)* Why—I don't remember!

CLARA. *(Archly)* Queer, your forgetting *that,* isn't it?

FRAZEE. Why, don't you know how many times you've been there with Miss Olds?

RODDY. What? *(Puzzlement.)*

CLARA. I won't have him teased, Henry. Why, he can't even guess how many times, can you, Mr. Roddy?

CAPTAIN. Sh'd think not. How could he remember all 't happened 'way last summer? *(*FRAZEE *gives them a contemptuous glance and goes up.)*

BELL

RODDY. *(To* CLARA*)* What's it about? What——

CLARA. Don't you see?

RODDY. Why, no.

CLARA. Just be nice to Miss Olds while he's here.

RODDY. Be nice to Miss Olds!

CLARA. Yes; you like her—you *do* like her——

RODDY. Why, certainly, I like her, but, what's that got to do with—I'll never give you up!

CLARA. Of course not.

BELL (Again R.*)*

*(*SEEBY *enters wearing a becoming white dress.)*

SEEBY. Didn't you hear the bell for supper?

CLARA. Why, Miss Olds! You've got a new gown! We were all just talking about you! *(To* FRAZEE *and generally.)* Doesn't she look exquisite? *Doesn't* she look pretty? *(Her glance goes to* RODDY *on the last word.)*

RODDY. *(Somewhat casually and surprised)* Why, yes, she does. *(More warmly.)* Why, she does, indeed! Why, Eusebia, you look—you look charming! You look perfectly beautiful!

SEEBY. *(Stunned)* What? *(She stands, frozen.)*

CLARA. *(With a somewhat frigid look at* RODDY*)* Indeed she does—in a way!

CAPTAIN. Bring your wife in t' the dining room, Mr. Frazee. The cook gits mad if we keep her vittles waitin'.

(Ad lib murmur from FRANCIS *and* CAPTAIN. *Exit* CAPTAIN, FRANCIS, MR. *and* MRS. FRAZEE.*)*

RODDY. You *do* look beautiful, Seeby. *(She almost weeps; he is dismayed.)* Why, what's the matter? Don't you like me to say you look beautiful?

SEEBY. Yes. I'm much obliged.

(The Act Drop descends as they go into the dining room.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *The same scene. The two table lamps are lit, but are shielded inside the glass shades with silk that gives them only a warm gold-brown luster, inoffensive to a sensitive eye; and the light of the room is cheerful, but not violently so. Outdoors it is moonlight, and the sea glimmers.* RODDY'S *canvas has been removed.*

DISCOVERED: FRAZEE *stands on the veranda, looking off, a cigar in his fingers.* CLARA *sits* L. *of table* L.C. *with a book that she does not read; she is rather tensely looking at her husband, whose back is toward her.* CAPTAIN *is in his chair by sofa and table* R.C., *smoking the cigar* FRAZEE *has given him.*

CAPTAIN. *(To* CLARA *and the world in general)* Yes, sir; they's twenty-eight diffunt articles—*condiments* you might call 'em—goes in a curry; and you can't git no *good* curry 'cep'n jest one place on the—well, on the *globe,* as you might call it—an' that's Bombay. As you *say,* though, Mrs. Frazee, that strawb'ry short-cake Mrs. Freehart cooked us this evenin', it *was* a right appetizin' dish—if a body didn't eat too *much* of it, like *I* done, doggone *me! (Swallows distastefully; turns his head to indicate he is speaking to back.)* Is the light a-winkin' good, Mr. Frazee?

FRAZEE. *(Not turning)* Yes. Very clear. Ah —I was looking at some people down on the beach—only two of 'em, in fact—walking by the surf in the moonlight——

CAPTAIN. You can see better with this glass. *(There is an old pair of long binoculars on the table near the* CAPTAIN, R.C.*)*

FRAZEE. *(Coming down)* I'll try it. *(The moment he turns,* CLARA *affects to read her book; he glances sharply at her as he comes down; takes the glass and returns to the veranda.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Speaking as* FRAZEE *goes up)* Evenin' like this, guess ye wouldn't think how that sea can *make* in wickid weathuh!

CLARA. *(Her book down again)* This place must be *desolate* in Winter.

CAPTAIN. No; it's nice. Seeby teaches school, then, an' I git a good deal more libutty—but I bet them *children* she *teaches* don't; I guess *them* children walk the chalk; pore things. No; winter's nice, natives have the place to 'rselves in the winter—no summer people. *(Going on contentedly.)* Of course, as you *say,* I don't mean anything personal, as you might call it.

*(*MRS. FREEHART *and* FRANCIS *enter from veranda, from* R., *passing* FRAZEE C.E., *and come down.* MRS. FREEHART *wears a plain hat and jacket in addition to the clothes worn in Act I, and no apron.* FRANCIS *is dressed as in Act I, with the addition of a shabby old Norfolk jacket—a relic from some boarder of a past season—and an old Derby hat; he has removed his overalls, wearing old trousers, too large for him and extremely bagged at the knees. He has a dark cigar, which he removes from his mouth as he enters. He carries a mailed copy of the Boston*

Transcript, which he hands to CAPTAIN. MRS. FREEHART *has a package under her arm; she crosses down, not speaking, to door down* R.*)*

FRANCIS. *(As he hands the paper to* CAPTAIN*)* Evenin' mail's in. Got it as we come from our walk. *(Goes on, following* MRS. FREEHART.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(Unfolding the paper)* Thank ye, Francis. Any news n the village?

FRANCIS. *(Casually, going* R.*, speaks without expression)* Yes; Will Thompson's complain' he's lost his wife again. Says he *hears* she's went for a trip to Boston with some railroad man.

(Exit FRANCIS *and* MRS. FREEHART *down* R. CAPTAIN *looks after them. Shut door.)*

CAPTAIN. Mighty reg'lar couple, Francis and Mrs. Freehart.

CLARA. *(Looking at* FRAZEE*)* Are they?

CAPTAIN. Francis been hopin' to marry her ever sense her husban' died. Neighbors say Francis was there before the pall-bearers. Fact is, he was askin' her all time her husban' laid sick. *(This has arrested* FRAZEE'S *attention. He lowers the binoculars, turning his head toward* CAPTAIN.*)*

FRAZEE. Is that common—in these parts? *(He glances at his wife, who knows that he does so, though she seems to read.)*

CAPTAIN. Same here as anywhere, I guess. City or country, I guess it's same; some man's wife gits the repitation bein' a good cook, they'll be plenty *after* her. *(Then at a supposed thought he suddenly anticipates on the part of his listeners.)* Oh, they're *moral! (He pronounces "Morr-ell.")*

FRAZEE. *(With no humor apparent, but with an underlying grimness)* Francis seemed moral to me.

(Glancing at CLARA.*)* I had quite a talk with him this afternoon while he was opening my trunk.

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding)* Yes, he's a talker. He an' Mrs. Freehart always *("allwiz")* take same walk, evenin's. They go down t' th' interubbin' Powuh House.

FRAZEE. They do! I should think *lovers* would walk by the sea—like those two down yonder.

CAPTAIN. No, ye see the folks that make a livin' by the ocean, it's more or less a place o' *business*. Francis, he lobsters, winters. So when he feels ro-a-man-tic, he an Miz Freehart walk over to the Powah House an' look at the masheeniry.

FRAZEE. *(The glasses to his eyes)* Those two on the beach—I believe they're coming up this way. Oh—they look rather like your daughter and Mr. Roddy. *(He turns down, leaving the glasses on a chair.)*

CAPTAIN. Mebbe so; mebbe so!

FRAZEE. You say there's no good curry except at Bombay? *(Behind table.* CLARA *looks at him; then at the binoculars on the chair by the door;* FRAZEE *has hung them over the chair back by a strap attached to them. As* FRAZEE, *his back to her, and the* CAPTAIN *continue talking,* CLARA *rises suddenly—her tensity has increased upon* FRAZEE'S *mention of* SEEBY *and* RODDY—*and quickly and silently she goes up, takes the binoculars with a quick motion, steps out on the veranda and looks out to off* L., *where* FRAZEE *has been looking. Meanwhile,* FRAZEE *and the* CAPTAIN *are continuing.)*

CAPTAIN. No, sir! I've tried curries in Chinee ports, too. They *call* 'em curries, but they ain't—not 'cep'n in Bombay.

FRAZEE. I suppose you've seen some queer weather before you left the sea, Captain Olds.

CAPTAIN. I've seen seven waterspouts all the

same time, in the Indian Ocean. Hangin' from the sky an' reachin' clean up from the water, they was; all seven of 'em.

CLARA. Oh, no. They're not far off now. Besides, I heard him ask her to walk with him, just after supper. *(To* FRAZEE.*)* Didn't you?

FRAZEE. Yes, I heard him, I even heard you suggesting it yourself. *(Thoughtfully.)* I wonder why? *(Smiling skeptically.)*

CLARA. Why? *(Then, casually.)* I just thought they might like to. They often go for a walk after supper. *(Strolls* L., *sits* L. *of table.)*

FRAZEE. *(As if casually)* Mr. Roddy and Miss Olds do? Well, I only wondered—— *(Pauses.)*

CLARA. *(Quietly)* You wondered what?

FRAZEE. I only wondered if you meant to suggest that they stay this long.

CLARA. *(Somewhat annoyed, tries to speak lightly)* Why, what difference does that make?

FRAZEE. None at all? *(She looks at him; he seems to take the look for answer, and speaks saturninely.)* No, I suppose not.

CAPTAIN. He's good company, Mr. Roddy, when he *feels* like it. *(Begins to read The Transcript.)*

FRAZEE. *(To* CLARA, *as if casually)* Do *you* find him so, Clara? *(Crosses* L. *to her.)*

CLARA. *(Setting the binoculars on table* L.C., *as she sits)* Oh, yes. He's rather moody sometimes. *(Her indifference is the least bit overdone.)*

FRAZEE. *(Thoughtfully)* I should imagine so. *(He looks at her as she picks up her book again. He still has his cigar, and places it in his mouth, then removes it as he speaks.)* I suppose you've been keeping up your music, since you've been here?

CLARA. *(Knowing what he means)* Oh, a little.

FRAZEE. *(As if musingly)* Music—and art. Out

of my line, I'm afraid, but they make quite a combination.

CLARA. *(Trying to be cool and being really contemptuous)* Combination? Why music *is* art, of course.

FRAZEE. Is it? I was thinking; I suppose Mr. Roddy appreciates your music—and you—well, his painting must give you a great deal of pleasure.

CLARA. No. He doesn't show his pictures.

FRAZEE. Not to anybody?

CLARA. Not that I know of.

FRAZEE. *(After a pause)* It's odd, Clara—you haven't asked me how long I'll be able to stay. *(This dialogue is carried on quietly; the* CAPTAIN *doesn't hear it, though he could if he were not interested in his paper.)*

CLARA. *(Looking up nervously)* Oh, I supposed, of course, you——

FRAZEE. *(Interrupting)* I was going to suggest you'd get ready to go home with me to-morrow.

CLARA. *(She looks at him, too dismayed to speak at once. Then her tone is incredulous)* To-morrow! Why—no—I couldn't do that.

FRAZEE. *(Studying her)* You couldn't. *(Not interrogative.)*

CLARA. *(Trying to speak simply)* Why, for one thing, I couldn't get ready. For another—why, this place is doing me good. I hadn't *thought* of going. Do *you* have to go to-morrow?

FRAZEE. I think perhaps we'll both go.

CLARA. *(Breathless, but motionless)* What for? Why, *I* can't go!

FRAZEE. Can't you? *(He is quietly almost ominous. She is unable to continue—is afraid that if she tries to do so she may show too much agitation. She rises suddenly and goes up part way.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Reading his paper)* British Steam-

ship "Ancaster," out of Algiers bound f' Portland, four days late 'count o' head winds; schooner "Carrie" o' Gloucester took three thousand pounds o' mackerel in a couple day's houlin'; Ferd'nand, ex-King o' Bulgaria, reported dead o' menengeetis. *(The first two items are read with somewhat more stress than the last, though all of the speech is near a monotone.)*

FRAZEE. *(In a low, but distinct voice, going up to* CLARA*)* I think you can be ready. *(The stress is on "think.")*

CLARA. *(Beginning hastily)* Henry, I have my own—— *(He cuts her off there; "my own plans," she means to say.)*

FRAZEE. I think we won't talk about it. *(Stress on "talk.")*

CLARA. *(Hastily)* But please *listen.* I——

FRAZEE. *(Shakes his head)* No. *(He goes out to veranda. She follows, making a sound, trying to speak. He shakes his head again, looks off* L., *checks her with a slight gesture. A ripple of silvery laughter is heard off up* L. CAPTAIN *looks up, lowering his paper.)*

CAPTAIN. Why, that's Seeby. I ain't heard her laugh like that sense her buthday! *("Birthday." The laughter is heard again;* CAPTAIN *smiles.)* Yes, sir, that Mr. Roddy, he *can* be good company, when he's a mind to!

*(*CLARA *is up* C., *but not on the veranda;* FRAZEE *is. She wishes to make an appeal to him, though she does not know just how, and fears he will refuse. He means to avoid the appeal.)*

SEEBY. *(Outside, cheerfully)* I *did* enjoy it, thanks! *(She comes in almost happily; a girl almost different from the* SEEBY *we have seen in Act I.*

She has become—just this moment—almost radiant; yet she is not wholly carefree or child-like. She is happy, but a ghost of care "still sits on the crupper" and wistfulness still lingers in her voice and laughter. She has taken off her hat just as she enters, and it swings from her hand by a ribbon. RODDY *follows her on and down.* RODDY *down* L. *As she comes in.)* It's the most *beautiful* night! *(Then quickly, and with a hint of implication.)* Mrs. Frazee, you ought to take your husband down to the beach to show *him.* *(*CLARA *gives her a hardish glance.* FRAZEE *moves off* L. *on veranda, out of sight.* CLARA *follows him tentatively, wishing to appeal to him. She remains in sight up* C.E. *Meanwhile* SEEBY *goes on down to* CAPTAIN.*)* Father—*(She kisses him upon the cheek.)*—it's after your bedtime; it's after nine o'clock.

CAPTAIN. *(Peevishly)* Na—I doe' want to. I want to set up see all what's goin' on!

SEEBY. When did you ever see anything happen in this neighborhood after nine o'clock?

CAPTAIN. *(Fretfully)* Then what *you* all so high-jinksed-up about? I heard ye laughin'!

SEEBY. *(Suddenly dreamy)* Oh, because it's such a beautiful evening.

CAPTAIN. *(Frowning)* Is *that* somethin' to laugh about? *(*SEEBY *doesn't hear him; she is looking straight out, absently. He is cross, continuing.)* What's mattuh 'th you?

RODDY. *(Seriously, and with something of her manner)* It *is* a pleasant evening, Cap'n. *(*CLARA, *looking anxiously off* L., *is struck by his tone and turns her head quickly to stare at* RODDY.*)*

SEEBY. I don't believe there's been a night like this since the—the end of August—last year.

RODDY. *(Casually)* August, last year—Oh, yes

—just before I left; I remember there *was* a moon then.

SEEBY. *(With both a faint pathos and some kept-to-herself satire; there had been so much of that last August moon that she remembers and he has forgotten)* Yes.

RODDY. Yes—it *was* lovely then. The moon's got that same elfin look again to-night. *(*CAPTAIN *straightens up his Transcript at this, having no interest in elfin moons, and reads.)*

SEEBY. *(Simply, accepting* RODDY *as an authority)* Is that what it was? *(*SEEBY *crosses to* RODDY.*)*

RODDY. *(Seriously)* Yes—and so were you elfin in the moonshine. Didn't you know it?

SEEBY. *(Seriously)* Why, no. *(She moves a little away.)* I—remember your saying so—last year.

RODDY. Don't you like my saying it?

SEEBY. *(Apologetically)* Well—it doesn't seem —appropriate.

RODDY. Didn't you have any ancestors in Salem?

SEEBY. Yes, we did.

RODDY. I think one of them must have been a witch.

SEEBY. No, *my* ancestors helped to massacre 'em. We don't like witches. *(She is thinking of* CLARA.*)*

RODDY. My! What a little *school* teacher you really are!

SEEBY. Oh, no. That's only in the winter. *(*RODDY *laughs, she goes on.)* I'd *like* ever so much to be elfin, of course.

RODDY. Well, you *were*—with the moonshine on you.

SEEBY. *(Dreamily)* Oh, do you *think* so?

CAPTAIN. Wa'n't they no mosquitoes?

RODDY. We didn't mind them. *(Turning seriously to* SEEBY.*)* Did we? *(A question.)*

SEEBY. *(Absently)* Oh, no. *(She sits* L. *of*

table. Up C., CLARA *bites her lips, displeased by both of them. She has virtually told* RODDY *to seem a lover, but when she sees it, she finds it painful. But she must make her husband listen, if she can; she moves off to* L. *on veranda, not quite out of sight.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Musing in an old man's tone)* Well, the ocean looks nice sometimes. As if it never *would* wish to do anything mean to ye! But it's deep, yessir.

RODDY. *(Smiling)* Looks innocent enough, tonight. Is it deep out yonder?

CAPTAIN. *Plenty* water there, yessir. *(Reads.)*

RODDY. *(Thoughtfully, earnestly, turning to* SEEBY*)* I wish I were really sure—— *(Crosses to* L. *of table.)*

SEEBY. What? *(Meaning, "What about?")*

RODDY. That you do forgive me—for what I said about—about this room.

SEEBY. *(Swallowing, but speaking as to one who would be forgiven anything)* Why—of *course* I do. *(*CLARA *glances sharply at them again and disappears to off* L.*)*

RODDY. It's not bad. I just had a fit of "silly temperament"—or some such rot. I'm nothing but moods—You know how I am——

SEEBY. *(Thoughtfully)* Yes; I know how you are.

RODDY. *(A little disturbed and made "moody" by this)* Lord! Sometimes I think you do. *(He leans forward, frowning gloomily.)*

SEEBY. People that aren't doing what they want to—they nearly always get moody.

RODDY. *(Rather curtly)* What is it I want to do, that I'm *not* doing?

SEEBY. Why, you're not painting the way you want to.

RODDY. *(Stung, jumping up)* Oh, damn!

SEEBY. *(Going on)* But you want to believe that you *are,* and that keeps you bothered. You *ought* to believe that you're *not,* and then you'd try and find out what's the matter.

RODDY. *(Breathing hard)* So you're an Art critic!

SEEBY. *(Stubbornly)* No; but I've seen other people that were moody. It was because they weren't doing what they wanted to most; and I guess what you want most is to be a good painter, isn't it?

RODDY. *(With a short laugh)* I see!

SEEBY. And this afternoon, when you—when you said that, I guess you were worse bothered than usual.

RODDY. About my pictures?

SEEBY. *(Smiling faintly)* Well, maybe *some* about Mr. Frazee's coming.

RODDY. *(A little startled)* Never mind that, please!

SEEBY. *(Smiling)* Oh! *(Meaning "What startled you?")*

RODDY. *(Half laughing at himself, ruefully)* Well, there I go snapping at you again. I don't mean to, because—well—I'd rather keep you liking me, if I could. *(With a quick glance up* c. *Then he comes and sits beside her, on piano stool; speaks gently.)* I haven't made you dislike me, have I, Eusebia? *(This is a sudden reversion to his posture of "interest" in her. She looks at him gravely, knowing that he too well knows better; his glance falls from hers. She smiles painfully. Ready, Guitar.)*

SEEBY. No.

RODDY. *(In a lover's voice)* Are you sure? *(She slowly inclines her head.)* Eusebia, could you promise to like me always—in spite of my moods?

SEEBY. *(She is startled by this, but does not move, except to look at him. Her voice is very small and plaintive.)* Did you mean that? To ask me—to like you, always?

RODDY. *(He has said more than he intended to, but has to go on)* Yes, of course. Will you?

SEEBY. *(Swallowing)* Why, yes—I will. *(Her eyes shine. She looks at him, smiles waveringly; it is as though he had "proposed" and she had "accepted him." RODDY takes her hand for a moment. She gives it quickly.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Reading)* Many vess-sells held up 'count o' dense fogs.

SEEBY. *(Rises, her face illumined; she is smiling and "breathless," goes to CAPTAIN)* Father, it's long past time.

CAPTAIN. *(Stubbornly reading his paper and not looking up)* Past time for what?

SEEBY. For Francis and me to get you to bed. *(Her voice now sounds happy.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Reading hard)* No 'tain't. I got to read my paper, ain't I?

SEEBY. *(Shaking her head)* Not any later. You're *going*.

CAPTAIN. *(Affecting great interest)* Listen! It says: "Atlantic Coast weathuh for the next four days is expected to continue mild, with winds sou'-east——"

SEEBY. *(Ringing the bell on his chair and then going to door down R. and opening it)* Francis! *(As she opens the door, sound of a guitar is heard off R. She calls again.)* Francis! *(The guitar stops, she returns to CAPTAIN'S chair and begins to propel him to up R.)* Gave you extra time to-night —lots of it! *(FRANCIS, eating something bulky—just what is not revealed—enters R. and goes to up R., opening the door. CLARA comes slowly into view*

on veranda up C., *looking at* RODDY. *He is thoughtful, disturbed in mind.)*

CAPTAIN. *(During this, peevish)* 'I Gorry! It's mean! Yes, *'tis* mean! You take a man 't's handled rough crews o' sailormen—made 'em hop an' shiver if he 's much as cleared 'is throat—an' then got to be ordered around like this——

SEEBY. *(Cheerfully and smiling)* Now, now! Do I swear at you the way you did at your crews? I *will,* though, if I've got to!

CAPTAIN. *(As she prepares to wheel him away)* You'll git a repitation; ye *will.* Neighbors *talk* 'bout the way I got to walk the chalk; an' you'll never git married.

SEEBY. *(Quietly, but as if determined)* I'll show you! *(Taking his paper under her arm.)*

CAPTAIN. Wunt nubbudy *ask* you. It's mighty *easy* to git to be an old maid in *this* commun'ty!

SEEBY. You ought to 've thought of that before you had me born here? *(Takes paper.)*

CAPTAIN. I *wun't* go to bed!

SEEBY. *Now,* Francis and I'll have you in, in a jiffy. *(Hurriedly, to* RODDY.*)* I'll come back soon's I can! *(She smiles as she turns her head from him.)*

CAPTAIN. *(As she wheels him off up* R.*)* Yes, sir, had eight children born to me an' *you* had to be the only one to—— *(*FRANCIS *follows, closing the door after them.)*

*(*RODDY *turns and looks at* CLARA. *She would be greatly agitated if she did not "keep tight hold on herself." She comes down a little way, but throughout the scene she is continually wary of her husband's potential presence. She sees that she knows where he is, all the time. The dialogue now has an air of being hurried and under cover, in spite of the feeling shown.)*

CLARA. *(With a slight motion to off up* L. *She stops to decide on words)* Hugh, what was all that about that girl's "forgiving" you?

RODDY. Oh, I'd abused this room to her. I *was* sorry.

CLARA. Yes, you sounded so.

RODDY. Why, you don't mind *that,* do you? I thought you *wanted* me to be as nice to her as I——

CLARA. I did! I wanted you to *seem* to like *her.*

RODDY. *(Innocently, debating it)* And, of course, that's all right; I do like her.

CLARA. But you needn't make her think she *owns* you, need you? Did you hear her tell me to take my husband and show *him!* Why, *she* thinks——

RODDY. Well, I didn't realize——

CLARA. I didn't mean for you to walk hours with her in the moonlight!

RODDY. But, my dear, you made me. You said so *before* her—"Don't you and Miss Olds want to go for a stroll?" I'd have had to be rude to her if I declined. You—you've done it *all.*

CLARA. You could have come back here long before you did.

RODDY. I suppose so; I didn't know——

CLARA. Let's don't waste any more time talking about Miss Olds, Hugh. It is wasted, because my husband's absolutely stubborn about not believing what he doesn't want to!

RODDY. He is?

CLARA. He *doesn't* believe what *I* wanted him to, about you and Miss Olds, and oh! this *might* be our last evening, Hugh!

RODDY. What!

CLARA. Hugh—he says he's going to make me leave with him—to-morrow.

RODDY. *(Badly flustered by this)* Why, good gracious, *that* can't be!

CLARA. He won't listen to me at all.

RODDY. Why, does he believe I'm in love with you?

CLARA. We *were* queer this afternoon—those daisy chains—and he *caught* me looking at you a little while ago with the glasses.

RODDY. But what does he *say?*

CLARA. *(Hurriedly, brokenly)* Nothing—he won't say anything—just says we've got to go.

RODDY. But you mustn't!

CLARA. *No,* I mustn't!

RODDY. Why, *I* can't let you go!

CLARA. No. And *I* can't! *(Coming nearer him.)* Oh, Hugh, if *this should* be the last together, be sweet to me!

RODDY. My dear! Oh——

CLARA. *(Despairingly)* Hugh, you've never *said* it. *Are* you in love with me?

RODDY. I haven't *said* it? You know what I've *felt.*

CLARA. If I face him out—and—*break* with him —would you want me? *(A very short break—all pauses are very short here. Then she finishes quickly.)* For always?

RODDY. *(Swallowing)* Give me the chance! *(He then stands frowning, in thought.)*

CLARA. *(At sound up* R.*)* Be careful! *(She first moves a hurried step back, to glance to off* L., *then, as* SEEBY'S *voice is heard off* R., *looks that way and goes to the piano, turning over some music.)*

SEEBY. *(Cheerily, off up* R.*)* And don't wake up, father! *(She comes in, door* R., *calling back to* R., *before she closes it.)* Don't wake up when I come with your medicine at twelve. *(Laughing.)* Just open your mouth and one eye, the way you did last

night. Good-night, dearie! *(*CAPTAIN'S *voice is heard, peevishly: "G'night, g'night!" She closes the door, smiling.)* I've let Francis stay and read the weather reports of the *whole* United States to him! *(She doesn't notice* CLARA, *but speaks to* RODDY; *she carries an old rolled chart; comes to table* R.C. *with it. He stands near the table.)* You were wondering how deep the water is out there. Father said to show you his chart of the coast here. *(Unfolding it on the table.)* You can see all the soundings; they're marked in fathoms. A fathom is six feet, but——

CLARA. *(Interrupting, as she selects some sheets of music)* I've found that "Tristan and Isolde" passage you spoke of. *(Sitting at the piano.)* Would you like me to—— *(She touches a chord softly; stops; studying the music.)*

SEEBY. Father said this chart was the very best one made. *(*RODDY *stands frowning;* CLARA *turns her head.)*

CLARA. Would you care for this? *(*RODDY *seems to wake up, partially; and turns his head to look at her.* SEEBY *looks at him, at* CLARA, *back at him again.)*

RODDY. *(Staring front, preoccupied)* Would I care for—— *(Unconsciously repeating. Music duet.)*

SEEBY. *(Seeming puzzled, a little plaintive)* Don't you want to see how deep the water is?

RODDY. *(Unconscious of her, wakes up, finishes to* CLARA, *who is still looking at him)* Of course—of *course* I care for it! *(Crosses* L.*)*

*(*CLARA *begins to play, as* RODDY *comes to her.* SEEBY *watches them, her hands unconsciously and slowly rolling up the chart.)*

SEEBY. *(Wistful, speaking of the chart)* Father thought you'd like to—— *(Emphasizes "father" a little.)*

*(*CLARA *plays a part of the "Liebestod" brilliantly;* RODDY *stands wrapt;* SEEBY *watches them steadily, her hands still moving slowly upon the chart.)*

CLARA. *(Softly, as she concludes)* Did you like it?

RODDY. *(Huskily)* "Like" it! Yes!

SEEBY. *(Still looking at them)* I don't think *I* did—much. It's too—it's too—well, I don't think a great deal *of* it.

*(*CLARA *glances slowly in* SEEBY'S *direction, but doesn't seem to see her, or to hear her; she plays some chords softly.* RODDY *looks at her.* FRANCIS *is heard off up* R.*)*

FRANCIS. G'night, Cap'n. *(He begins to hum "I could not chide thee, chide thee, Marguerite"; comes on up* R., *closing the door.)* Well, he ought know 'nuff 'bout the weathuh to last him till t'morra! *(Goes to door* R., *softly humming: "But oh, the song that broke my heart," as he exits, down* R. SEEBY'S *eyes have grown larger; she has an idea As he disappears she starts, and then hurries after him.)*

SEEBY. *(Calling after him)* Francis!—Oh, Francis! *(Goes out hurriedly down* R.*)*

RODDY. Could you play that once more, you did this afternoon? *(She plays the love theme improvization looking up at him; he looking down at her. He bends closer, his look eloquent.)*

CLARA. *(As she plays)* Do you hear me saying it?

RODDY. Yes.

CLARA. *(In a stricken voice)* What *are* we to do?

*(*FRAZEE *walks slowly and silently into view up* C. *and looks at them. They do not observe him. His expression slowly becomes grimly sardonic: "I thought so!" But he breathes heavily.* CLARA'S *playing falters; becomes very faint. Then, off up* R. *is heard the sound of other music, as if on the other side of the house, at first; then becoming louder as though the musicians came round in front near the veranda. Duet.)*

CLARA. *(Not looking back)* Why, what is that?

FRAZEE. *(In a quiet, grim voice, but it deeply startles them, and they turn to stare at him)* I think it's a serenade for you, Clara.

CLARA. *(Breathless, trying to smile)* Oh, *you're* there, Henry!

FRAZEE. ——No! I believe they're serenading Mr. Roddy.

CLARA. *(Trying to recover from the surprise)* What—what *are* they trying to do?

FRAZEE. *(Coming down a few steps)* An old song—but I think I like it better than *Tristan and Isolde*, myself. *(His voice is significant of a suppressed but strong contempt on "Tristan and Isolde.")*

(Outside SEEBY *and* FRANCIS *are heard singing to the guitar, the Nightingale Serenade: "Last night the nightingale woke me."* SEEBY *sings the air and* FRANCIS *the "second" in a sweet elderly tenor. They come closer.)*

CLARA. *(With a nervous half laugh) Good* gracious—it's Miss *Olds!*

FRAZEE. Can't you listen, Clara? *She's* had to listen to *you* enough! *(*CLARA *bites her lip, flinching from his comprehension.* RODDY *stares at him.)*

(The singing is louder; the musicians have come up on the veranda, and a moment or two later they appear in the doorway, C.E., *and sing the last minute—or a little less—of the song there in full view.* SEEBY *stands close to* FRANCIS; *her eyes to front and uplifted; she is, just then, a little conscious that she is performing—a little bit like a shy child "declaring a piece";—but she sings her best.* FRANCIS, *his head close to the finger-board and keys of the guitar, his eyes to heaven, is lost in his music. When the song is over* SEEBY *is breathless and shy.)*

FRAZEE. *(As they stop)* Bravo! That was lovely, Miss Olds.

SEEBY. Thank you. *(She comes down—*FRANCIS *with her, and is just able to lift her eyes to* RODDY.*)* Did—did you like it? *(Not stressing "you.")*

RODDY. *(In a husky tone, but with politeness)* Oh, yes; very *much! (He does not move, and has no facial expression except a "strained" look about the eyes and mouth.)*

SEEBY. Of course, *Francis* knows how to sing, because he's *always* been so musical. He's been in the choir—how long have you been in the choir, Francis?

FRANCIS. Only thirty-two year and eight months.

SEEBY. *(Shyly to* RODDY*)* You didn't like it? Don't you like any but one kind of music?

RODDY. *(Politely, as before)* Oh, *yes. (He speaks quickly, but has to force himself to speak at*

all; his mind is violently occupied with CLARA *and* FRAZEE.*)*

SEEBY. *(She goes to* R.C., *somewhat nervously, apologizing)* I guess maybe it was a mistake not to let Francis sing alone—probably you'd have enjoyed it more.

FRAZEE. *(Quietly)* No, we wouldn't.

SEEBY. *(With an attempt at a deprecating laugh)* Of course *Francis's* part of it was all right—he's spent nearly all of his spare time on music for so many years—but maybe *I*——

FRAZEE. Don't be troubling about *your* part of it, Miss Olds.

SEEBY. *(Nervously)* Well—thank you. *(A little timidly, but hopefully to* RODDY.*)* Would you like to look at the chart now?

RODDY. Ah—— *(Glances at* CLARA *and* FRAZEE.*)* Yes. *(He crosses to her.)*

SEEBY. *(Smiles brightly as she unrolls the chart. Perhaps, after all, she has shown* RODDY *that she has a little music in her, and can compete in some measure. At least he seems to have left* CLARA *for her)* Father said to show you here where it drops off to fifteen fathoms. That's where the channel for the ships is—to come up into the river.

RODDY. *(Frowning)* I see.

FRAZEE. *(*C. *Turning down to her)* Miss Olds —I'll only interrupt you a minute——

SEEBY. *(Looking up, but still holding the chart on the table, keeping it from rolling up)* Yes?

FRAZEE. This afternoon I said I'd let you know how long I'd be staying. I thought I'd better speak of it now.

SEEBY. Very well, Mr. Frazee.

FRAZEE. I'll be leaving to-morrow morning. *(*CLARA, *up* L.C., *opens her eyes wide in hopes. Her face begins to be radiant.)*

SEEBY. *(A shade disturbed)* Yes, Mr. Frazee.

CLARA. *(With a little solicitude, artificial)* Oh—you're going to-morrow, Henry? *(Crosses down* L.*)*

FRAZEE. Yes. *(Then to* SEEBY.*)* I'll take the eleven-twenty-five train; it's a through express. Could you have something here to drive to the station in?

SEEBY. Certainly.

FRAZEE. And the trunks?

SEEBY. Francis can take your trunk over.

FRAZEE. I think we'll need a larger wagon than that buckboard he used this afternoon. Besides *my* trunk, Mrs. Frazee has *three* and a hat-trunk. *(*CLARA *is startled;* RODDY *stares.)*

SEEBY. Oh—is Mrs. Frazee going, too? *(There is a concealed hope in this.)*

FRAZEE. Yes, Miss Olds; so both rooms will be vacant—Mrs. Frazee is going with me.

SEEBY. Oh, I didn't know——

CLARA. *(In a sharp, strained voice, but trying not to "make a scene before people")* Why, Henry, have you heard me say I was going?

FRAZEE. You'll have everything arranged for us to leave on the eleven-twenty-five, Miss Olds?

SEEBY. *(Puzzled)* Why, yes, Mr. Frazee, if——

FRAZEE. That's settled, then. Thank you. *(Turns* L.*)*

CLARA. *(Trying to laugh easily)* Don't expect *my* room to be vacant, Miss Olds. *(Turning quickly and speaking sharply to* FRAZEE, *her voice hard, but shaking.)* Hadn't you better consult me a little when you make plans for us both?

FRAZEE. Yes, I'm thinking of you. *(Goes on up* L.*)*

CLARA. *(Loudly)* I'll do my own thinking, thanks!

FRAZEE. Never mind now, please! *(Exits up* L. *Shuts door.)*

CLARA. *(Following)* Henry! You've got to *listen* to me! I'm *not*—— *(She goes quickly off, up* L., *after him.* RODDY *steps toward* L., *staring after them.)*

SEEBY. *(After a pause, in a voice still showing astonishment)* Why—that'll make a great difference, won't it? *(Not interrogative.)* I'm afraid you'll—miss her—if she has to go.

RODDY. *(Huskily, but with a little sharpness)* She's not gone yet, and I don't think she will.

SEEBY. If she does—I'm afraid you'll miss her music. *(*RODDY *breathes heavily, not answering. He is still looking* L. SEEBY *comes nearer him; she gives a little deprecatory laugh.)* I—guess it was pretty silly of me to try to sing for you. I ought to be ashamed of myself for telling you this afternoon that I sing right well. *(Laughing again deprecatorily.)* I guess it sounded pretty awful. Honestly, were you sort of mortified?

RODDY. *(Puzzled and not favorable)* Was I "mortified"?

SEEBY. *(Shyly, but smiling wanly)* I mean when I was singing were you sort of mortified for me?

RODDY. *(Not sharply)* Good heavens! But why should *I* feel that way?

SEEBY. Because—— *(She stops, turns away in thought; then turns to him again, smiling a little with an idea.)* Well, you shouldn't—and I'll tell you why not. I'll tell you, because you asked me—to like you always. *(Again shyly on this, but smiling a little.)*

RODDY. *(Remembering this with a nervousness that he conceals)* Oh—yes. *(He sits, biting his lip,* R. *of table.)*

SEEBY. *(Gravely)* Would you like to understand why—I sang?

RODDY. Well, just now, if you don't mind, I'm trying to understand something else.

SEEBY. *(Still gravely)* Wouldn't you be willing to understand about—me—first? I—I feel as if I'd just *have* to *make* you. *(She looks, with an idea, at the "high-boy.")* Oh, I believe I can! *(She goes to the "high-boy.")*

RODDY. *(Absently)* Well, I'm afraid I'd rather, really rather——

SEEBY. *(Taking a square of white card-board ornamented with a pink ribbon from the "high-boy")* It won't take but a minute. *(Apologetically.)* It's it's a poem! *(He looks surprised; she gets his look quickly and goes on hastily.)* I didn't write it—I didn't write it. *(She says this twice, very fast.)*

RODDY. *(Again looking absent and worried)* Oh!

SEEBY. *(Coming toward him)* It's a—it's a poem that was written—*to* me. *(Apologetically.)*

RODDY. *(Muttering politely, without looking at her)* Oh, I see!

SEEBY. *(Earnest)* But not by any person that you'd call particularly a *poet;* I don't mean it's really a *poem* at all. The children in the school I taught last winter wrote it and one of them recited it to me the last day of school.

RODDY. *(Sighing)* I see—one of the little girls?

SEEBY. *(Very faintly conscious)* Well—no; it was one of the boys; he wasn't very little, and of course he ought to have known how to write a better poem at his age—and size—too. *(Not "pointing" this, but rather dropping this, and then speaking quickly, not smiling.)* If you could stand it I thought I'd just—so you'd see what I mean; it's called, "Good-bye, Miss Olds, Good-bye." *(She smiles and swallows.)* And this is the way it begins. *(Then she reads, and does it apologetically, yet with*

humor, and is nevertheless touched by the tribute, so that her voice has a tremor.)

"The school-year is over forever, Miss Olds,
And tho' usually we're glad when the last day unfolds,
This year that's just passed
We now feel should be classed
With a feeling of sorrow
Which we shall feel when to-morrow
Will not disclose you
To our sad longing view,
Miss Olds."

(She laughs, tremulously.) I—I'll only read the next stanza, Mr. Roddy—just this much.

"All the birds and the flowers
Will sing through the hours——"

Of course he got mixed up there, about the flowers singing——

"They will sing through the hours
All summer, and haunt us, Miss Olds,
With thoughts of past days
When you gave us your praise
Or even when you did not,
Anyhow, you will ne'er be forgot,
Miss Olds."

It goes on, but I guess that's enough—I guess anyhow it's enough for you to see what I mean, isn't it? You do, don't you?

RODDY. No, I'm afraid I can't say I do.

SEEBY. Well, the—the pupil that wrote it—he was waiting in the school-yard afterwards, when I came out; and he had his head down, pretending not

to see me, but, of course, as I came by, I looked up at him and I——

RODDY. *(Without interest)* You looked *up* at him?

SEEBY. *(Without apparent consciousness)* Yes; I mentioned he wasn't one of the *little* boys, didn't I?

RODDY. *(Murmuring)* Oh, yes! I see!

SEEBY. I saw he wanted to say something about his—his poem, poor thing, so I told him again I thought it was lovely. You couldn't guess what he said. *(She speaks wistfully, not smiling.)* He said —he did say it just this way—he said: "Well, I didn't expect much I'd fasc'nate you, but I hoped if I didn't, maybe anyway you kind of laugh, or something." Well, that's just what *I* hoped, you see.

RODDY. When?

SEEBY. I knew I couldn't *fascinate* you—but she's always playing to you—and so I got Francis—and—we sang. I thought maybe anyway you'd laugh—or—or something! But you didn't!

RODDY. Eusebia!

RODDY. *(Impatiently trying to express patience)* I thought your singing was very nice—but I—well, you know——

SEEBY. *(Not showing what she feels and speaking rather lightly)* Oh, yes; about her going tomorrow. *(Going rather quickly to table* R.C., *her expression thoughtful, but not depressed, rather cheerful.)* Of course you would be. But I was thinking——

RODDY. *(With the same impatient patience)* Thinking what?

SEEBY. *(To front of sofa; she is timid and gentle about this, but altogether sincere and genuine—as though she fears he may not like it but has some hope that he may)* Well, we need one anyway, when

the young people begin to come, later on—and they say they make piano records now you could hardly tell the difference. I was thinking maybe you wouldn't mind her leaving so much if I bought—if I bought a——

RODDY. *(Explosively)* A phonograph! Murder!

SEEBY. You wouldn't like it?

RODDY. Do you suppose it's only her *music* that I'd miss?

SEEBY. *(Not slowly, but with a lip that begins to twitch)* It wouldn't be just her music?

RODDY. Oh, dear, no!

SEEBY. You'd miss her, herself. Then it wasn't true you meant it?

RODDY. *(His "nerves" exasperated)* Meant *what? (Turns to her.)*

SEEBY. You said, "Will you like me—always—"

RODDY. Oh, Eusebia, what if I did? *(Crosses down* L.*)*

SEEBY. Oh! *(This is only a little, quick sound. Abruptly she sits, facing front, but with her head bent so far over that her face is almost lost to view. She begins to cry silently in a childlike way; she doesn't use a handkerchief, but rubs her eyes with the heel of her clenched right hand, like a child.)*

RODDY. *(Irritated, upset and yet sorry)* Oh, my goodness, don't *cry!* Don't! Don't! *(He comes to her hurriedly.)* Why, of *course,* I mean it. *(He puts his hand on her shoulder.)* Certainly, I did! Why *wouldn't* I want you to like me always?

SEEBY. *(She looks up, tearful, but smiling, to hear him say it; and she speaks naively)* Why, I thought you were going to take it back!

RODDY. *(Still trying to be kind—he takes her hand—but frowning that she makes so much of it)* No, no!

SEEBY. I understand it; of *course* you'd miss her,

herself. She's been with you so much—and she likes *you* so—I really thought it was a good thing her husband *did* come——

RODDY. Hush! *(His attention is caught by a voice off* L. *He stands with his hand unconsciously still grasping hers; she is still seated.)*

CLARA. *(Off, with sharp determination)* I tell you I'm *not—going! (She enters swiftly,* R., *and for an instant is unaware of* SEEBY *and* RODDY, *because she is intent upon her assertion, calling loudly and determinedly back and upward as to* FRAZEE *upstairs. She is seen in the opened doorway, the glass door knob still in her hand.)* I'm—*not going! (Then she swings the door shut, angrily, and turns to* RODDY, *her voice loud and agitated.)* Hugh, you'll have to—— *(She checks herself abruptly, seeing how close he stands to* SEEBY, *and that the latter still retains his hand.* CLARA *is amazed.)* Why—— *(*RODDY *moves toward her, dropping* SEEBY'S *hand; he is scarcely conscious of this.* SEEBY *rises.)*

RODDY. What is it?

CLARA. *(Her hand to her breast)* I didn't mean to interrupt anything.

RODDY. You didn't.

SEEBY. *(Coming near him)* Oh, no. *(Gently, rather quickly, almost in a whisper, with a faint smile.)* You want to say good-bye to her, don't you. *(Not interrogative.)* I know. It's all right. *(She goes quickly up and off,* C.E.*)*

CLARA. *(Breathing fast)* That's pleasant!

RODDY. I don't see——

CLARA. *(With a short, desperate half laugh)* I come to you in the greatest crisis of my life—when my husband is—*brutal*—and I find you holding somebody else's hand! *(This dialogue throughout is hurried.)*

RODDY. *I* couldn't help it!

CLARA. No! They never can!

RODDY. She's taken some things I said too seriously. I suppose in the country they put all kinds of significance to things *we* say and don't mean anything by at all. I didn't realize that.

CLARA. So, to explain it, you had to hold her hand! *(Checking him as he quickly seems to protest.)* Never mind! If you say you didn't *mean* what you said to her——

RODDY. *(Interrupting sharply)* I didn't as she *took* it.

CLARA. Then you'd better make that plain to her, hadn't you?

RODDY. I suppose so. *(Affirmatively.)*

CLARA. It will be easy for you—if you *did* mean what you said to *me! (With a hint of bitterness.)*

RODDY. *(Reproachfully gentle)* Don't taunt me, Clara.

CLARA. Hugh, if I stay it means a break with my husband. That's what it means! You understand?

RODDY. *(Swallowing)* I only ask you to give me the chance.

CLARA. Then, when Miss Olds knows that, it ought to settle her ideas of what you meant about *her.*

RODDY. *(Frowning, faintly disturbed)* Yes.

CLARA. And you *want* me?

RODDY. Of course.

CLARA. *(Huskily, quickly. She clings to him for one instant; he is passive in this and it is over too quickly for him to think whether or not he should kiss her. She immediately runs up to* C.E., *calling)* Miss Olds! Miss Olds! Come in please. *(She comes quickly back down to* RODDY, *but speaks excitedly and amusedly to* SEEBY, *who comes in* C.E.*)*

You needn't be tactful any longer, Miss Olds. I'm not saying good-bye to Mr. Roddy.

SEEBY. You're not?

RODDY. Eusebia——

SEEBY. *(Looking at him quickly, smiling)* Yes?

RODDY. I—well it's difficult how to put it—but——

CLARA. *(L.C. Interrupting)* It's not difficult; it's very simple. I'm not going away with my husband to-morrow, Miss Olds. *(Her back is to door up L.)*

(FRAZEE enters there and stands listening.)

SEEBY. *(Her voice strong enough, but slightly tremulous)* You're going to stay on—here?

CLARA. I didn't say that; I said I was not going home with my husband.

FRAZEE. *(Coming forward to between SEEBY and CLARA)* You've settled it then, Clara?

CLARA. *(Trembling, but sharp)* Yes, I have. You *know* I *have!* Absolutely! *(The scene is of course played with tensity.)*

FRAZEE. *(Suddenly turning to SEEBY)* What do *you* think of that, Miss Olds? I take it you understand what the lady means.

SEEBY. I'm not sure.

CLARA. Well, it's time now for both you and my husband to *be* sure—he wouldn't let me alone; he *would* bring on a crisis! So when I leave here it *won't* be with *him,* but it *may* be with Mr. Roddy! Oh, yes, it may!

SEEBY. What? Why, you can't!

CLARA. No?

SEEBY. Oh, no, Mrs. Frazee!

CLARA. Why not?

SEEBY. Why, Mr. Roddy can't!

CLARA. You poor child. I took the trouble to divert my husband's attentions to *you,* and Mr. Roddy—well, Mr. Roddy said a little more to you than he *meant.*

SEEBY. *(To* RODDY*)* Did you? Did you say more than you meant?

RODDY. No, I didn't.

CLARA. *(To him sharply)* She *took* it for more than you meant, didn't she? You just told me so!

SEEBY. *(Stricken, but not weeping)* Oh!

CLARA. Mr. Roddy isn't *engaged* to you, Miss Olds!

SEEBY. No! *(A prolonged note of lamentation and resentment together.)*

CLARA. You said Mr. Roddy *couldn't* go with me. You don't still believe he "couldn't?"

FRAZEE. *I* think he "couldn't." What do you say, Miss Olds? Do you think Mr. Roddy understands his responsibilities?

SEEBY. Oh, no! *(She is crying a little, not moving.)*

RODDY. I'll answer for myself, sir!

FRAZEE. Yes, I think it's about time! *(Turning sharply from him.)* Don't have the slightest worry, Miss Olds. My wife hasn't any intention of eloping with the young man.

CLARA. *(Vehemently)* I *haven't.*

FRAZEE. *(With strong, but tired contempt)* This isn't the first time she's played Tristan and Isolde for a good listener!

CLARA. That's not true!

FRAZEE. I've been through much the same thing before, Miss Olds. Last winter it was a violinist.

CLARA. Varonoff? How dare you say I cared for him?

FRAZEE. Oh, *they* played Tristan and Isolde together——

CLARA. *Playing* with him doesn't mean I *cared* for him, does it?

FRAZEE. *(Going on to* SEEBY*)* But she didn't elope with him, and she won't run off with Mr. Roddy, Miss Olds! *One* reason I know she won't is because I had quite a talk with your man Francis this afternoon——

SEEBY. Oh!

FRAZEE. *(To* CLARA*)* Miss Olds is like me, Clara; she's practical. She couldn't explain why she said Mr. Roddy *"couldn't"* run away with you. Well, I *will*. Your porter was quite a news budget, Miss Olds; one thing he mentioned was that Mr. Roddy is staying here at half your regular rate.

RODDY. *(Stunned)* What!

FRAZEE. *That* seems to *hurt* a little, does it, Mr. Roddy?

RODDY. Well, suppose it does? What of it?

FRAZEE. I'm only being practical; if you're living here on half-rates, it hardly seems you'll be able to——

SEEBY. *(Interrupting)* But he *isn't;* it isn't *so*, Mr. Frazee—it isn't true at all! Mr. Roddy stays the *long* season—clear from April to November; of course we have a higher rate for transients than we do for people that stay the whole time. We *always* do; Mr. Roddy never asked for any special favor that way.

WARN CURTAIN

FRAZEE. *(Incredulous)* But he needed one, didn't he?

SEEBY. *(With emotion underneath, but controlling it)* Oh, no! Francis must have just *put* it like that——

CLARA. *(Sitting)* Because he thought it would *please* you, Henry.

SEEBY. We *always* have that rule about people that stay over two months, Mr. Frazee.

FRAZEE. I see! You're *not* just trying to save Mr. Roddy's face.

SEEBY. Oh, no!

FRAZEE. And he *is* amply able to provide for——

CLARA. *(Seated)* Haven't you about finished with this exhibition, Henry? Because I think it just about finishes you for *me*. You decide to quite overwhelm me with the information that Mr. Roddy is poor—as if I'd *care* whether he is or not!—and even *that* turns out to be not true! *(Rising.)* You *do* know how to make a wife respect you—and how to *keep* her! Miss Olds, you're unusual; thank you for being on the side of the woman that runs away! You understand, this finishes it, Henry; I *hope* you do! *(Exit.)*

FRAZEE. Well, we'll probably find out whether or not she means it, in the morning. I'm afraid *I* don't much care. Good-night, Miss Olds. *(Exit up* R.*)*

RODDY. Eusebia, she—she put it wrong about your thinking I said more than I meant!

SEEBY. Oh, no, she didn't! I understand that now.

RODDY. But I didn't say more than I meant. I only mean you did not think I meant——

SEEBY. Never mind that, please. It seems to me you've got a great many other things and—responsibilities—to think of—just now!

RODDY. *(Dropping wretchedly into a chair)* Oh, yes—I have!

SEEBY. And—obligations.

RODDY. Yes. *(Exhales a deep breath.)*

SEEBY. I'd like to know how Francis found out about *that!* And it isn't other people's business to know when we have special rates!

RODDY. Is that why you told them what wasn't so?

SEEBY. I only told 'em what *is* so—transient rates *are* higher.

RODDY. Yes, but you made 'em think—they think I'm well enough off. Why did you do it?

SEEBY. Why? Why, so that everything would be the way you wanted it to be. It's all right for you now.

RODDY. It is? Why, you made her think I'm well enough off to——

SEEBY. Well, you are just as well off as you were before.

RODDY. Yes, but she—why Mr. Frazee thinks I'd be able to——

SEEBY. Oh, it would have been terrible to let him go on thinking you couldn't afford to run away—with his—with Mrs. Frazee.

RODDY. *(Indignantly) Eusebia!*

SEEBY. After you have thought it over, Mr. Roddy, be sure to put the lights out before you go to bed!

RODDY. See here! She says she's going with me; *I* don't know where she wants to go; she might want to go to Europe!

SEEBY. Well, you could go there just as easily as any place else!

RODDY. I'd like to know where I'd find money enough to take her!

SEEBY. Couldn't you?

RODDY. Where could I?

SEEBY. Why, you heard what Mr. Frazee said; I'm almost sure he'd be glad to let you have enough for that. Good night, Mr. Roddy.

CURTAIN

ACT III

The same scene. It is bright morning outdoors. FRANCIS, *dressed as in Act I, and with a very sore expression, is vindictively sweeping the carpet with a carpet-cleaner of the lawn-mower type. He utters a monosyllable of hatred now and then: "P-tuh!" jouncing the sweeper at some fragment of dust on the carpet. Suddenly, as he works, he sings quite loudly:*

"One evenin' I was strollin'
Through the citee (city) of the dead——"

He breaks off with a sharp "Yah," and a violent frown at some internal thought; jounces the sweeper, and abruptly changes his song:

"Many's the heart that is breakin'
Af-tuh the ball!"

Then he says, "Tuh"! and jounces the sweeper.

His back is now toward C.E., *and* MRS. FREEHART *appears there on the veranda. She is as in Act I, except that she wears an old, checked sun-bonnet and has upon her left arm a basket of vegetables just pulled from the earth: a dirty trowel in her right hand. She comes to* FRANCIS *from behind him, dropping the trowel*

in the basket as she approaches. He knows she is coming behind him; she is not stealing upon him slyly, but just walking up to him; she has no expression, and he shows no sign of being aware of her. When she reaches him she gives him a hearty slap with her right hand between his shoulder blades, and at once passes on, imperturbable. He slaps her, likewise, upon the back, in the same expressionless manner, as she goes by him. Neither gives any sign of recognizing the fact that these slaps have been bestowed. It is one of the habitual forms of their courtship. Having slapped her, FRANCIS *wipes his brow with his forearm and goes on sweeping.*

MRS. FREEHART. *(Pausing near door down* R.*)* She say anythin' to you how many she wants to set fuh?

FRANCIS. Set fuh when?

MRS. FREEHART. Fuh table this noon.

FRANCIS. *(Sweeping, crisply)* Couldn' tell ye.

MRS. FREEHART. Di'n she tell ye to awduh *("order")* Will Thompson's cart *(She pronounces "cart" almost as "cat.")* fur Mr. an' Mrs. Frazee's trunks?

FRANCIS. I can git the ca't if it's needed, but I d' know 'f *Miz* Frazee's goin'. Heard 'er *say* she wan't. *(He jounces the sweeper.) "Buh!"*

MRS. FREEHART. *Hee*-uh! What makes you take an' jounce the sweepuh like that?

FRANCIS. *(He stops sweeping, wipes his forehead with his right forearm, and speaks with bitterness)* *I'll* tell you why I take an' jounce the sweepuh; *yes'm*: it's about time in *this* country we done what them Rooshins done in Rooshy! Rooshy, *that's* the country fuh *me!*

MRS. FREEHART. What's the Rooshins got to do with your jouncin' the carpit sweepuh?

FRANCIS. *(Resentfully)* Rooshy's the country where they get things *right.* They got some freedom o' *speech* in Rooshy.

MRS. FREEHART. *(Placidly, counting vegetables in her basket)* You says only yessdy *("yesterday")* evenin' them Rooshins was all loonitics.

FRANCIS. *(Making a resentful sweep with his sweeper)* Changed my mind this mornin'. Seems this ain't a free country no more! *(Plaintively.)* Seems a man ain't 'lowed to even mention no facts to a boarder!

MRS. FREEHART. *(Placidly)* What facts?

FRANCIS. Well, s'posin' 'a body jes' *happens* to find out one boarder's on half rates, an' takes an' happens to mention it to *another* boarder. *No,* suh! Seems a man can't say what he's a mind to in *this* country! *(Sweeps violently.)* Can't say nothin' but what he's *'lowed* to! *(Stopping the sweeper.)* Else he'll git a dressin'-down you might thought I'd tuck an' murdered *("muh-dud")* the whole commun'ty! I never did git no sech a dress'-down sense my gran-mothuh caught me stealin' ten cents! *(Sweeping.)*

MRS. FREEHART. What's what you told Mr. Frazee got to do with all them *Rooshins?*

FRANCIS. *(Puts sweeper* L.*)* It's got *this* much; 'f they git up a Bull-sheviss tickit 'n this country, I'm a good mind to take an' vote it! They had a K'zah *("Czar")* at the head of their gov'ment over in Rooshy, dressin' 'em down, callin' 'em whatever he's a mind to, an' they wouldn't stand it. Looks like we got a K'zah in *this* country! *(As* SEEBY'S *voice is heard off* R.*)*

SEEBY. *(Off* R.*)* No, indeed, you can't!

FRANCIS. Jes' *listen* to 'er!

*(*SEEBY *is heard; "No, indeed, you can't," then she enters from* R., *the* CAPTAIN'S *room, or the passage to it. She is dressed as first in Act I, wearing an apron; and she carries a tray with used dishes and a small china coffee-pot upon it; the* CAPTAIN *has had his breakfast in bed. He is heard complaining: "Hee-uh! I want to——")*

CAPTAIN. *(Off stage, complaining)* Hee-uh! I want to——

SEEBY. *(Speaking back to him before she closes the door)* No. Fifteen minutes' nap after your breakfast before you can come out.

CAPTAIN. *(Off)* Hee-uh!

SEEBY. *(Quietly)* No, indeed. *(As she closes the door and comes in, she looks darkly and steadily at* FRANCIS. *He begins to sweep at once, plaintively. After looking at him for a moment with quiet severity.)* Are you talking some more, Francis? *(She has no humor under this; this is quiet and serious.)*

FRANCIS. *(Plaintively, but resentfully)* No. Ain't. I know buttuh. *(Sweeping.)* No convasation 'lowed on the premises.

SEEBY. *(*R.C.*)* Did you sweep over here?

FRANCIS. *(Sweeping)* Done all that side the room.

SEEBY. *(Still holding the tray, and pointing to the floor, near her)* Look at the dust you left here.

FRANCIS. *(Muttering)* Me? *(Crosses to* R.C. *He comes quickly, however, and vindicatively attacks the area to which she continues to point until he gives it treatment.)*

MRS. FREEHART. How many you want I should set table fuh this noon? Francis says Miz Frazee says she wan't goin' away with her husband.

SEEBY. *(C. Glancing at* FRANCIS, *quietly)* Francis says so? *(*FRANCIS *pushes the sweeper straight ahead of him to a part of the room as far from her as possible; his air is one of diligence, up* R.*)*

MRS. FREEHART. Oh, you mean Francis is wrong?

SEEBY. *(Significantly)* No; I've found out that Francis is a *good listener! (She gives him a short, hard glance, which he catches with a swiftly turning head.)* Mrs. Frazee did say she wouldn't go.

FRANCIS. *(Resting his right elbow and left hand on the handle of the sweeper)* Well, if she ain't, no use f' me tell Will Thompson to bring his ca't. If it's only Mr. Frazee's trunk, I can take *it* ovuh in the buckboard.

SEEBY. No. *He* said the other way. You tell Thompson to bring his team and the big cart. *(She almost calls it a "ca't.")* I'll set the table myself, Mrs. Freehart—when we find out if she's going.

*(*MRS. FREEHART *goes out, down* R., *and* SEEBY, *carrying the tray, is following her, but looks back at* FRANCIS. *He is still resting his arm on the sweeper handle and regarding her with disfavor; but as she looks at him he starts and begins instantly to sweep again with a cowed industriousness. She goes out, down* R., *closing the door. He continues to sweep for a moment, then stops. Then, listening to* R. *and thinking he hears her returning, he begins to sweep hard again. Then he slacks up and stops. Frowns, shakes his head and stands staring bitterly* R. RODDY *enters down* L. *He wears knickerbockers and jacket and brown shoes, not new; carries his cap in his hand. His hair is neatly brushed, but he looks haggard. As he comes in,* FRANCIS *glances round at him and begins to sweep again, and, a moment later, to sing the*

Marseillaise in English with considerable feeling, though in a suppressed voice. RODDY *stands a moment, frowning; then goes up to the piano, tosses his cap upon it, and turns over a quantity of sheet music that is on top.* FRANCIS *pauses, wipes his brow and addresses him.)*

FRANCIS. Don't look to *me* like Miz Frazee's expectin' to travel none with husband. *That* music's all hern, ain't it? *(The music.)*

RODDY. Yes. Has she been in here?

FRANCIS. Ain't been out her *room* that *I* see. *I* tuck her breakfast up. Stuck her a'm *("arm")* out f' the tray in a Chinee *wrap*puh. *(Pauses.) You* ain't thinkin' o' leavin', are ye?

RODDY. *(Looking at the music, absently)* I might.

FRANCIS. *I* am. *I'm* thinkin' o' leavin'. Why *no* man ain't got *no* libutty in *this* house!

RODDY. *(Smiling wanly, as he puts some of the music back on the piano)* Yes. I think I remember once or twice *last* season, you were talking this way; said you thought of leaving. *(Very lightly stresses "thought.")*

FRANCIS. Yes, an' I'd do it, too, if somebuddy was to come along an' make me an offuh, an' show me where I c'd *make* a dolluh some bettuh place. Why, a man can't claim his own voice is his own round *hee*-uh! It's dretful!

RODDY. *(He looks at him, understanding, nods sorrily, and speaks in a low voice)* I see.

FRANCIS. Seems a man ain't even 'lowed to speak in his own defence 'round *hee*-uh. Can't git a word *in*.

RODDY. *(Gravely)* No.

FRANCIS. *Rooshy's* the place! Ovuh there they do what they're a mind to, an' they won't let *nobody*

talk to *them; not about anythin'*! *(Moves gloomily away, pushing his sweeper)* I'd know what *our* country's a-comin' to!

*(*CLARA *enters up* L. *Her dress—(waist, skirt and brown shoes)—tells nothing of her real intentions. She is, like* RODDY, *neat, but haggard. She comes in, halts, looks at* RODDY *He looks at her.* FRANCIS *goes on sweeping, humming the Marseillaise to himself. After a few moments, he shakes his head, says "Puh!" bitterly, in a low tone, addressing* RODDY, *as if challenging him, but expecting a sympathetic rejoinder.* FRANCIS *picks up the waste-basket, which has some paper in it, and goes out down* R., *carrying the waste-basket and sweeper.* CLARA *shows, by a breathy sigh and a relaxation of a strained attitude, her relief that he is gone. She sinks limply in a chair,* L.C. RODDY *slowly comes down near her. After a moment, not looking at him, she speaks in a small voice of pathos.)*

CLARA. Well, Hugh?

RODDY. *(In a low voice)* Well? *(*R. *of* CLARA.*)*

CLARA. I want you to understand if there's *one* thing in the world I *don't* care about, it's money. *He* thinks I do, of course. That's one reason my life with him has been so hard! *His* life is nothing but just getting ahead of somebody else. So he's cynical, and he's cynical about *me.* He knows I don't care a *darn* about "what people would *say!*"—but he thinks I wouldn't give up—Oh, well, an easy way of living! *(Looking at* RODDY *suddenly, and appealing indignantly.) That's* what he thinks of me, Hugh!

RODDY. *(Crosses to her)* Of course it isn't true. I know you'd be brave, dear.

CLARA. *You* understand me better in a week than

he has in seven years! *I* didn't take it for granted you were particularly well off; I didn't think about that at all.

RODDY. I know you didn't. *(He is thinking about it, now.)*

CLARA. *(With a short laugh)* When he said that about your being poor, he thought that'd just *settle me!* Huh! *(A breath of scornful laughter. She rises.)*

RODDY. So—you're not going with him, Clara?

CLARA. *(With a sharpish laugh in which, however, there is a real, though painful, amusement)* *Going* with him. That'd be a nice trip, wouldn't it? *(Going up, restlessly,* L. *of table.)* All day in a parlor car *drawing*-room with him after what's happened here! Oh, my!

RODDY. You've made up your mind, Clara?

CLARA. *(Turning up again)* That would be a pleasant thing to *face,* wouldn't it? *(With a short and more pained repetition of her laugh. Both are* L.C., *above table.)*

RODDY. *(Heavily)* Well—— *(He stands helpless for a moment, then forces himself to go on.)* Clara, I ought——

CLARA. *(Turning back, gravely)* Yes, dear?

RODDY. I—— *(More sharply, in a kind of desperation.)* I oughtn't to let you go into this blind.

CLARA. *(Quickly)* I wouldn't be.

RODDY. You—you know you wouldn't have a Pullman drawing-room with *me,* Clara.

CLARA. *(Smiling wanly)* No, but I'd be *with* you.

RODDY. *(Turning from her with a groan)* Oh, I think I'm a poor sort!

CLARA. *(Quickly, reassuringly)* That's—just a little depression.

RODDY. *(Bitterly, crosses* R.*)* Oh, my, no, it

isn't; and you couldn't get me out of it with a piano! I think I'm the worst fool I ever *heard* of! *(With increasing vehemence, comes back to her.)* Do you *know* the thing that hurt me worst of all last night?

CLARA. Why, I suppose it was hearing my husband abusing me so!

RODDY. *(With a despairing laugh)* No, it wasn't! It was his coming out with it that I board here on half rates! It's the truth, I do!

CLARA. *(Quickly, easily)* Why, there's nothing wrong in that. *(She goes to the piano and begins sorting and arranging her many music sheets.)*

RODDY. *(Lamenting almost passionately)* No! Not *wrong;* yet here I am, trying to get a man's wife away from him, and pretending to make love to a girl to keep him from seeing it, and *hurting* the girl like the dickens—and yet when it all comes *out,* the only thing I'm *ashamed* of, at the *time,* is being exposed as living here on half rates! What kind of a snob *am* I?

CLARA. *(Lightly)* Why, I wouldn't think it'd bother you a minute! *(She continues throughout to arrange her music.)*

RODDY. No, you wouldn't! I'm afraid *you* think I'm a great young *man!*

CLARA. *(Smiling absently)* Indeed, I do.

RODDY. *You* think I can *paint!*

CLARA. Of course you can.

RODDY. *(Vehemently)* I can't, though! I thought I could because I was so crazy *to* think so! I looked 'em all over this morning, and there isn't one of 'em worth a damn! And I've got to begin all over, and it's time I knew it!

CLARA. *(Looking at her music)* It's just a mood, dear.

RODDY. It'd better *last,* if I'm ever going to

amount to anything! Why, everything *about* me's wrong: my painting's wrong and my *character's* wrong. Why, I'm awful! *(His voice rises with a kind of plaintiveness here. On arm of sofa.)*

CLARA. *(With tenderness, lightly and still a little absently)* You're "awful" *nice, I* think!

RODDY. What *business* has anybody boarding on half rates to take a man's wife away from him?

CLARA. *(As if absently, and with a trace of bitterness) He* wouldn't mind much! He said so.

RODDY. *(Not heeding her)* To take *her* to board on half rates somewhere, if we can *get* 'em! *(He rises.)* Clara, some fool gave me six hundred dollars for two pictures last winter. That's what I'm living on yet.

CLARA. *(Looking at him over her sheets of music)* But you'll sell plenty of others. *(Her voice is a little breathless.)*

RODDY. *(Swallowing and making a contemptuous motion with his head to the door down* L.*)* Not *these!* Lord knows when!

CLARA. *(Thoughtfully)* You will some time. *(She has her music sorted, and in a compact mass. She has been looking more at it than at* RODDY *throughout the scene. She now takes the music and holds it with her left arm.)*

RODDY. *(Turning to her)* Well, now you know all I can tell you. *(Smiling wretchedly.)* What's to be done?

CLARA. *(Coming to him, speaks softly, quickly, reassuringly, and with a somewhat eager simplicity)* Why, Hugh, everything you've said doesn't make any difference to *me*. You can be sure if I ever *did* change my mind about coming to you it wouldn't be because you're poor. That's the *last* thing *I'd* think of!

RODDY. *(Looking at her piteously, but speaking*

out strongly enough) You mean if you give me up it'd be because *I'm* such a *mess?*

CLARA. Who said anything about giving you up!

RODDY. You're not going to?

CLARA. *(Quickly—as if the idea were preposterous)* Indeed, I'm not! Do you think I'll let that man spoil the happiest thing in my life? *(Going* L., *angry upon this thought.)* Everything is going to be all right.

RODDY. Is it?

CLARA. Of course.

RODDY. *(Beginning sharply)* Clara—— *(He is sharply interrupted by a loud ringing of the* CAPTAIN'S *bell and impatient thumpings off up* R. RODDY *begins again.)* Clara—I—— *(The bell and thumping again interrupt him; as soon as they stop he opens his mouth to speak again, but* CLARA *checks him with a gesture to down* R.*)*

CLARA. *(Warning him with a gesture)* I've thought just what'll be the best way for us to do. *(Her voice is hurried and a little suppressed. She smiles.)*

*(*SEEBY *enters down* R. *The bell rings again; the thumpings are renewed.* SEEBY *glances at* RODDY *and* CLARA *expressionlessly and calls back thorugh doorway down* R.*)*

SEEBY. *(Calling)* Francis! Time for us to get him into his chair.

*(*FRANCIS *enters down* R. *with the waste-basket, empty; he restores it to place and goes to up* R. *with* SEEBY. FRANCIS *exits up* R. *at once, but* SEEBY *pauses; looking across thoughtfully at* CLARA.*)*

CLARA. *(Hastily, in an undertone to* RODDY*)* I'll tell you. *(She smiles sweetly and reassuringly to him and goes out quickly up* L.*)*

SEEBY. *(Up* R.*)* D' she say what she's going to do? *(Going on gravely.)* I just wanted to know whether you and she'll be here for dinner.

RODDY. *(In a low voice)* I think we'll be here that long. *(He turns up. Sits by the piano, gloomily thinking.)*

SEEBY. *(Quietly)* All right. *(She goes out* R. *The* CAPTAIN *is heard complaining.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Peevishly, off* R.*)* Hee-uh! Don't han'le me so rough, Francis! Wazza mattuh of you! Nice way you treat me, Seeby! Go off an' neglect me when I want to git *out!*

SEEBY. *(Cheerfully, off* R.*)* There we go! Yes, we'll git out where there's some *air! (She pushes him on in the wheel chair; she has his cap and shawl under her arm; he looks plaintive. She wheels him to* C.*)* Here we are! *(*FRANCIS *follows her out up* R. *Goes down* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(Fretfully)* I want to go out on the *porch.*

SEEBY. *(Soothingly cheerful)* In a few minutes, when you get used to the air of this room. It's cooler than yours, and the porch is cooler still. *(She puts his shawl on him as she speaks.) There,* father!

CAPTAIN. *(Pulling at the shawl)* I don't *want* the shawl! *(Snatching the cap.)* Gimme my cap. *(He puts it on.)* I want my cap, but I *wunt* have this damn *shawl!*

SEEBY. *(Serenely tying the shawl about him)* Yes; you need it.

CAPTAIN. I don't care 'f I need it, I wunt *have* it!

SEEBY. *(Serenely)* Yes, dearie! *(Pins it with a safety pin in the back.) Now* it won't come off.

CAPTAIN. *(Moans, giving up wretchedly, after trying to reach the pin)* Ach! *I* got no resistance. I bet if I ever git my *legs* back you wunt have your way with me!

FRANCIS. *(Muttering)* Yes, she will.

SEEBY. *(She has paid no attention to either of them, but looks fixedly at an area of the carpet; she looks up and speaks to* FRANCIS, *who is just going out down* R.*)* Francis!

FRANCIS. *(Looking back)* Well, what now? *(Plaintively and as though he must bend his back to the burden.)*

SEEBY. Look at the dust here you didn't get.

FRANCIS. *(Promptly and firmly)* Then it's been put there since.

SEEBY. *(Quietly)* Bring the sweeper. *(*FRANCIS *makes a brief gesture of despair and goes.)* Close the door after you, Francis. *(Not sharply, but seriously.)*

FRANCIS. *(Just coming back in)* Got to open it again, haven't I, if I'm comin' right back with the sweepuh?

SEEBY. *(Warning him)* Francis! *(Not sharply or ominously.)*

FRANCIS. *(Moaning almost as if he sang it in falsetto) Oh,* my soul! *(Exit, closing the door.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Insisting strongly, in a high voice, very cross)* I want to g' out on the porch *now,* I tell ye!

SEEBY. *(Cheerily)* Soon's I've made your bed, father.

CAPTAIN. Can I smoke yet?

SEEBY. *(Serenely)* Not till then. *(Exit up* R.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(Moaning) Dog*-gone it! Can't do *nothin'* less she says so! *(*FRANCIS *enters down* R. *with the sweeper and very low in spirits.* CAPTAIN

goes on.) Got to be ordered around in my own house same's if I might be less'n some *inseck!*

FRANCIS. *(Applying the sweeper) "Inseck!" (With a sore laugh.)* Why a inseck's a *king* in *this* house 'long side of you or me. Don't pride yourself you're way up high in no *inseck* class, Cap'n!

CAPTAIN. Says I can't even smoke till she gits my *bed* made! *That's* good sense, *ain't* it?

FRANCIS. You got that box o' stumps ye been hidin' from her. Why'n't ye light one?

CAPTAIN. Why, she'd smell it on me, wouldn't she?

FRANCIS. Yep; this ain't no *free* man's house; we got a K'zah hee-uh, Cap'n!

CAPTAIN. Got a who?

FRANCIS. A K'zah—like them Rooshins use' to have.

CAPTAIN. Well, if he was anythin' like Seeby I pity 'em! Why, I ain't got as much libutty as a canary bird. A canary bird can dodge around or take a few *hops* whenever he's a mind to! I ain't 'lowed to!

FRANCIS. *(Sweeping) No,* suh!

CAPTAIN. I tell *you,* Mr. Roddy, you're a lucky man!

RODDY. *(With a short laugh)* I'm lucky?

CAPTAIN. You're lucky ain't no woman to boss you in an inch of your life!

RODDY. *(Shaking his head)* I don't know; I don't know.

CAPTAIN. Mr. Roddy, all I got to say to *any* man is just this: Don't never let no quiet, bossy little woman git a-holt of ye!

FRANCIS. A man's got no chance with them women. Once they *git* him, all he evuh knows aftuh that is he's doin' somethin' they told him to!

CAPTAIN. *(Becoming determined)* I ain't *nub-*

buddy's doormat! I'll show her! The minute she comes back in this room I'm a-goin' to act just exackly's I'm a mind to! I'm goin' straight out on that porch an' I'm a-goin' to light me a *seegar!* I'll show her! *("I'll show'uh" is what he says.)*

FRANCIS. Well, I hope to see it!

CAPTAIN. *(Promising)* You will.

FRANCIS. Well, we'll soon find out 'f ye got it *in* ye!

(SEEBY *enters up* R., *some folded linen over her arm. She speaks briskly and indulgently as she enters.)*

SEEBY. Now, Father, you've been so good——

CAPTAIN. *(Interrupting crossly)* I ain't!

SEEBY. *(Going on as she reaches him and putting her hands on the back of the chair) Now* you can go out on the porch. It's *time* for that *now.*

RODDY. *(Jumping up and striding to her)* Let *me* take him.

(SEEBY *lets him without speaking to him; and gets the binoculars from the table.* RODDY *wheels him to up* C.)

SEEBY. And here are your glasses for you, so you can watch the sea for vessels. *(She hands him the binoculars.)* There! And you can have your cigar now, too. *(She gets a cigar and matches from a locked drawer in the highboy—she has the key—and takes them to him.* RODDY *leaves him at* C.E. *on veranda, facing* R. FRANCIS *is* R., *staring at* CAPTAIN. SEEBY *holds a match for* CAPTAIN.*)* And here are your matches. There! *(He takes the match from her, partly lights his cigar, and becomes*

conscious of FRANCIS'S *stare.* SEEBY *has moved away from the* CAPTAIN.*)*

CAPTAIN. *(To* FRANCIS, *irritably)* Who you lookin' at? I done what I said; *showed* ye, didn't I? I *am* out here an' I *am* a-smokin', ain't I? Done what I said, didn't I?

FRANCIS. *(Scornfully)* Yes, just exactly.

SEEBY. Francis.

FRANCIS. *(Quickly)* I 'n't say anythin'!

SEEBY. *(Handing him the linen)* Put this in the clo'es basket. Did you tell Thompson to bring his team to the side door? *(That is, in* L. *direction.)*

FRANCIS. Told 'im.

SEEBY. You'd better find out how many trunks are going. *(He goes languidly toward door* R. *She speaks quietly)* Hurry. *(He at once moves faster and exits down* R. SEEBY *goes to close the drawer from which she has taken the cigar and the matches and locks it. She had left it open.* CAPTAIN *works his chair around to face up on veranda.)*

RODDY. Eusebia?

SEEBY. *(Has not seemed to be aware of him. Speaks gently, but as though preoccupied)* Yes. *(Opening another drawer, she puts chair* L. *in place.)*

RODDY. I've been looking over the work I've done since I came this year.

SEEBY. *(Absently)* Have you? *(She takes a square of soft cloth from the drawer and closes the drawer.)*

RODDY. I found you were right about it.

SEEBY. Was I? *(She begins to rub the wooden parts of a chair with the cloth; she speaks gloomily in a low tone as to herself, up* L. *to back of door)* I knew it! He didn't *touch* this chair when he rubbed 'em down!

RODDY. My work *now* is worse than I did last

year. *(He is sparing himself nothing; it hurts, but he is self-controlled.)*

SEEBY. *(Working)* Well, you could hardly help *that. (She keeps her eyes on her work.)*

RODDY. Why?

SEEBY. *(Continuing to rub and speaking as if absently)* Why, you didn't have anybody go *with* you when you were working last year. People do their best work when somebody isn't talking to 'em, don't they?

RODDY. *(Groaningly)* I guess they do.

SEEBY. Well, then, all you need to do is to go outdoors and work alone. *(Her tone and work continue as before.)* That is, unless you have to take care of Mrs. Frazee.

RODDY. I don't know *what* I'm going to do about that. *(He walks about nervously to* R. *and back.)*

SEEBY. Why don't you know?

RODDY. Because she hasn't really told me.

SEEBY. *(Pausing a moment to look at him gravely)* What do you think she's going to make you do? *(In an even, quiet tone of inquiry.)*

RODDY. *(Tossing up his hands despairingly)* Good heavens, is it true, I wonder? Do men only do what women make 'em do?

SEEBY. *(Still looking at him)* No. Mr. Frazee doesn't.

RODDY. *(Dropping into a chair)* Your father thinks it's true.

SEEBY. *(Beginning to work again)* Oh, some men have to be looked after. *He* had to be, even before he was sick; he wanted to marry—oh, I don't know who-all!

RODDY. *(Slowly, looking at her fixedly)* But you didn't let him.

SEEBY. *(Working, speaks simply as in explanation)* He kept changing his mind. As soon as he

settled on one he'd find out something about her he didn't like. Sometimes he couldn't think himself what it was he didn't like, and I'd have to tell him.

RODDY. Ah—I see. *(He looks at her. She finishes with the chair and seizes another; looks at it thoughtfully; then seeing a suspicious spot, attacks it with the cloth. He speaks in a husky voice, leaning toward her)* Eusebia, will you give me the cloth and let me rub that chair for you?

SEEBY. *(Puzzled)* Why, no. What for?

RODDY. *(Groaning and getting up)* You don't even believe I could do *that!* You don't think I can do *any*thing, do you?

SEEBY. *(Rubbing the chair, but more slowly)* Why, yes; I think you could paint—some time.

RODDY. *(Incredulous)* You do? *(Rises.)*

SEEBY. *(Her hand pausing)* If you'd work alone —and keep at *it.*

RODDY. *(Coming near her)* Last night there were —several things for me to be—ashamed of.

SEEBY. Well——

RODDY. And yet *you* knew what I was—*most* ashamed of. I want to know how you knew it.

SEEBY. Well—just from knowing you.

RODDY. *(Despairingly)* That's it! *Knowing* me made you think I'd be ashamed of the *pettiest* thing! It's sickening, but you were right!

SEEBY. *(Working slowly)* Oh, well——

RODDY. I haven't *stayed* most ashamed of that, Eusebia. I hope you understand what I've been thinking about *since* then.

SEEBY. *(On her knees working)* I s'pose you've been wondering a good deal what she's going to have you do.

RODDY. Yes. I *have;* it's true. But I've been wondering *more* just what horrible things I ought to think of myself for—for—— *(She stops rubbing.)*

SEEBY. *(Smiling)* I'll say it. For—for making up to *me* so that Mrs. Frazee's husband wouldn't see what was going on?

RODDY. Yes.

SEEBY. *(After a pause. Coolly)* But you needn't bother about that. *(She begins to rub the chair again.)* Because *I* don't. *(She rises, gives the chair a look-over, a final rub on a spot.)* It doesn't bother me—*any!* *(She takes the cloth back to the drawer.)*

RODDY. *(Mystified)* But—but——

SEEBY. Not a bit.

RODDY. But I wasn't pretending and you know it.

SEEBY. How do you know I do?

RODDY. Because I do.

SEEBY. *(Reassuringly)* Well. *(Coming to him.)* Let me tell you. I *will* like you always and I was glad you asked me to. From the day you came here last year I saw you were a person that could do a great deal if somebody looked after you and made you do what you ought to. And all the time since, I've wished I just *could* do that. That's the way I am; when I see anybody that ought to be made to behave a certain way, I can't help wanting to make 'em. And I *was* doing a good deal with you when Mrs. Frazee came and spoiled it. Well, last night I was trying to get you back, so I could go on—and when you were so—sweet to me, I thought for a little while I did have you back to work again. That's all it is. I'm like that.

RODDY. You—you just wanted to make me do what I—I *ought* to—the way you feel about your father.

SEEBY. *(Swallowing)* Yes—that's the way I am. *(She comes to chair.)*

RODDY. *(Ruefully)* Well, I've shown the way *I* am! *(Groaning.)*

SEEBY. *(Gravely)* Yes.

RODDY. Pretty bad stuff to work on.

SEEBY. No. You're just—just—— *(She doesn't know how to put it.)*

RODDY. Just what?

SEEBY. Oh, just sort of like—people.

RODDY. *(Gulping)* All right. What had I better do now?

SEEBY. *(Gravely)* Do you ask me? *(Slightest stress on "me.")*

RODDY. Won't you tell me?

SEEBY. Well, *first,* you have to wait around and see what Mrs. Frazee wants, don't you?

RODDY. *(Not enthusiastic)* I suppose so.

SEEBY. *(Slowly, with an air of grave simplicity)* Don't you want her to leave her husband?

RODDY. *(Bothered)* Of course, I *ought* to say I do——

SEEBY. I see. *(Nodding.)* You mean it's your duty to want her to run away.

RODDY. *(Laughing wretchedly, groaning)* Well, I don't! Oh, Lord!

SEEBY. But you have to go if she says so, don't you?

RODDY. *(Desperately, but with a remnant of humor)* *I* don't know! *I* haven't got any sense; *you* know that now! Eusebia, I have an idea I'm just what you'd *like* a man to be—without *any* backbone and without *any* brains!—so you can take entire charge of him! Isn't it so?

SEEBY. *(Thoughtfully, as if she hadn't listened)* You want me to tell you what to do?

RODDY. I do.

SEEBY. *(She is at the piano, looking at it musingly. Casually)* She took *all* her music, didn't she? *(Affirmative.)*

RODDY. Are you going to tell me what to do? *(She still looks at the piano.)* Aren't you going to?

SEEBY. *(Absently)* Yes. I think you'd better stay here. Just stay in this room.

RODDY. How long?

SEEBY. *(Casually, friendly, still preoccupied)* Well—you'd better stay till I tell you. *(He sits obediently, not happy.)*

(FRANCIS *enters up* L.)

FRANCIS. *(To* SEEBY*)* George Smith's out yon with his snappy Ford; says you ordered it f' Mr. Frazee. Will Thompson's ca'ts there, too. Mr. Frazee's lookin' fuh you: guess he wants to settle.

SEEBY. *(Quickly)* Oh, I'll come. *(Exit up* L.*)*

FRANCIS. *(To* RODDY*)* Ain'che goin' out to the gate to say good-bye? *(Gesturing with his head toward* L. CAPTAIN *turns chair part round, his attention attracted.)*

RODDY. No. I'm going to stay here.

FRANCIS. What fuh?

RODDY. Because Miss Olds told me to.

FRANCIS. *(Huskily, after a pause)* She did? (RODDY *nods gravely.)* How *long* ye goin' to set there—'cause she told ye to? *(With pained satire.)*

RODDY. Until she tells me to go.

FRANCIS. *(Gloomily)* D'joo hear that, Cap'n?

CAPTAIN. *(Nodding decisively)* I did!

FRANCIS. *(With genuine feeling)* Well, Mr. Roddy, I d'know as it's my place, so to speak, to be offerin' to say what I *think;* but I certainly do hate to see it, I do. I hate to see it!

RODDY. What? To *see* what?

FRANCIS. *(Plaintive with sympathy, but hurrying the speech)* 'I Gorry, if a man can't have a little fun cuttin' up with a *married woman once* in a while when he ain't married him*self, yet,* I'd know—

I *da* know what our country's comin' to! *(Goes up.)*

(FRAZEE *enters up* L. *He glances at* RODDY, *passing him to go to the* CAPTAIN; *then pauses.)*

FRAZEE. *(As if about to say something)* Oh—uh—— *(Then decides not to and goes on dryly)* Well, good-bye, Mr. Roddy. *(Goes briskly up to the* CAPTAIN, *while* RODDY *feebly murmurs.)*

RODDY. Uh—good-bye.

FRAZEE. *(Shaking hands)* Good-bye, Cap'n Olds.

CAPTAIN. Good-bye, suh. Good-bye. Hope ye injoyed you' stay. I'm afraid Mr. Roddy there'll feel you're leavin' him in the lurch, as it were, him and you bein' the only he-boarders up to now. He's certainly been great company fuh your wife, too.

(FRANCIS *starts to laugh. Checks himself.)*

RODDY. *(Shuddering)* Oh, murder!

CAPTAIN. G'bye, sir. Come again.

FRAZEE. Thanks. Oh, Francis?

FRANCIS. *(Going to him quickly)* Here I be.

FRAZEE. Thanks for getting the trunks down. *(Puts something in his hand. At the word "trunks,"* RODDY *starts and looks at him.)*

FRANCIS. Oh, you're puffeckly walcome!

FRAZEE. Good-bye. I'll go around this way. *(Exit on veranda to off* L.*)*

FRANCIS. *(Coming down)* Nice man, Frazee.

RODDY. *(Sharply)* Did he say "trunk" or "trunks"?

FRANCIS. "Trunks." Ain't ye even 'lowed to know she's goin'?

RODDY. *(Huskily)* Is she?

(CLARA *enters up* L. *She has put on her traveling coat and hat and gloves.* RODDY *rises, looking at her dumbly. She looks at him, drops her eyes, goes to* FRANCIS, *and puts something in his hand.)*

CLARA. *(In a low voice)* Good-bye, Francis.

FRANCIS. *(Looking down into his hand)* You're puffeckly walcome, Miz Frazee. *(Affably; then he becomes sympathetic)* We're all mighty sorry to see ye go, Mrs. Frazee. That is to say, I am an' Cap'n Olds is, an' I'm *sure* Mr. Roddy is—an' Mrs. Freehart—— *(He seems to be going on, but* SEEBY *enters as far as* C.E. *on veranda and interrupts at this point. She carries in her hand a bunch of forget-me-nots, and wears a becoming hat.)*

SEEBY. Oh, Mrs. Frazee, father wants to say good-bye to you if you will. Then I'll wheel him to the other end of the porch where it's sunnier.

CAPTAIN. *(Quickly)* No! It's hot 'nuff right hee-uh. I want—— *(But* CLARA *has come to him.)*

CLARA. Good-bye, Captain Olds.

CAPTAIN. Good-bye, ma'am. Come again, an' bring your good husband.

SEEBY. And perhaps you'd wear these? *(She gives her the flowers.)*

CLARA. Oh—forget-me-nots! *(Looks at* SEEBY, *who smiles.)* Thank you, Miss Olds. *(Rather stiffly. She pins them to her waist and turns down.)*

SEEBY. *(In a sharp whisper)* Francis! (FRANCIS *staring from* CLARA *to* RODDY, *and wishing to see their parting, pays no attention. She repeats the whisper)* Francis!

FRANCIS. *(Surprised)* Me?

(EUSEBIA *looks at him primly. He comes up and she makes a gesture toward the chair.* FRANCIS

begins to push it to R. *in obedience to the gesture.)*

SEEBY. Clear up to the *sunny* end.

CAPTAIN. *(Protesting)* I da *want* to! I want t' stay hee-uh—see what's goin' on! *(His voice grows more peevish and cracks plaintively.)* I want to stay hee-uh! I da *want* to be in the sun! *(He ceases to be heard.* SEEBY *goes off* L. *on veranda. She doesn't look into the room.)*

CLARA. *(Demurely)* It *isn't*—it isn't good-bye, Hugh!

RODDY. *(Incredulously)* It isn't?

CLARA. No! Of *course* it isn't!

RODDY. *(Astounded)* Well—what is it, then?

CLARA. Didn't you hear me when I told you I'd thought out just what was the best way for us to do?

RODDY. Why, yes.

CLARA. Well, this is it. *(Smiling)* Don't look *quite* so puzzled!

RODDY. But——

CLARA. Why, Hugh, we've just *found* each other. Did you think I'd give you up when I've just found you?

RODDY. *(Awkwardly)* But—you're going——

CLARA. Yes, but so are you.

RODDY. Why, no; I'm staying here.

CLARA. Yes, but not always! You're coming to New York *some* time, aren't you?

RODDY. *(Dazed)* Why, I suppose——

CLARA. *Well? (Meaning "You see what that means.")*

RODDY. Oh.

CLARA. *(Smiling at his simplicity)* You can come and see me there, can't you? We can go to hear music together, can't we? We can go right

on being just what we've started to be to each other here; don't you see?

RODDY. Why——

CLARA. *That's* what I meant! *(Crosses* R.*)* I do wish I hadn't got so upset last night, because I'll have a fearful day with him; and besides it'll make it a little difficult about your coming to the house when *he's* there, but we'll *manage*.

*(*SEEBY *enters from* L. *on veranda to* C.E.*)*

SEEBY. *(Smiling apologetically)* I'm sorry, but I'm afraid Mr. Frazee asked me to say he's waiting. I—told *him* to sit still in the Ford; I'd tell you.

CLARA. *(Nonchalantly, crossing* L. *to* RODDY*)* Oh, yes. Good-bye. *(Giving her hand to* RODDY.*)* Good-bye——

RODDY. *(Huskily)* Good-bye. *(She goes up. As she does so,* SEEBY *goes* R. *on veranda, out of sight.)*

CLARA. *(At* C.E.*)* Good-bye! *(Seeing that* SEEBY *is gone, she adds, smilingly in a suppressed, hurried voice)* For a *little* while! I'm sure this is the better way, Hugh. It's only *au 'voir! (She goes off quickly to* L. *on veranda.)*

SEEBY. *(Off* R. *on veranda)* All right! *(Cheerfully)* If it's too warm up there, you can come back. *(Appears at* C.E., *pushing the* CAPTAIN.*)* *There,* you're back!

CAPTAIN. *(Sore)* Yes, when jes' what I wanted to see's all ovuh!

SEEBY. Hush! *(Comes down.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Muttering)* Missed the hull thing!

RODDY. *(Slowly inquiring)* Eusebia, you told me to stay here so that——

SEEBY. *(Cheerfully sad)* Yes.

RODDY. *(More sharply)* I believe *you* thought she was going, all the time.

SEEBY. *(Gently)* Yes; I was pretty sure she would.

RODDY. Why did you think so?

SEEBY. *(Looking at him and wondering if he understands how much she means)* Well, I thought her husband—understood her.

RODDY. *(With a rueful laugh)* I see. It's extraordinary, but I really do understand what you mean, Eusebia! *(Turning, speaks with rueful philosophy)* Well, that's the end o' that!

SEEB. *(Gently thoughtful,* C.*)* I guess it is.

RODDY. So what next?

SEEBY. What?

RODDY. What do I do now?

SEEBY. *(As if reminded)* Oh, yes—but—— *(Then as if surprised)* Why, don't you know, yourself?

RODDY. No. I don't know anything.

(SEEBY *laughs a little, incredulously.)*

RODDY. *(Emphasizing it) No.* What do I do?

SEEBY. Why, now you begin to *paint.*

(There is a very short pause here. MRS. FREEHART *enters down* R. *with a small lunch basket. They do not notice her.)*

RODDY. Right away?

SEEBY. Why, of course.

RODDY. All right. *(He looks at her, strides to door down* L. *and exits quickly.)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(Coming from down* R.*)* Here's his lunch for him. (SEEBY *takes it, sits* C. *and opens the lid.* MRS. FREEHART *mildly protests.)* Oh, ye'll

find I remembered everythin' right's usual. *(Going up.)*

SEEBY. Yes.

(MRS. FREEHART *moves out of sight on veranda.* SEEBY *closes the lid of the basket, and, still sitting, looks at it thoughtfully.* RODDY *enters briskly down* L. *He has a new blank canvas, and his painting traps slung over his shoulder. He gets his cap quickly from the top of the piano and comes and stands near her.)*

RODDY. *(Briskly)* Well? Shall I work all day?

SEEBY. *(Still sitting, thoughtful)* Well, I think I *would.*

RODDY. All right. *(Starts to go out* C.E.*)*

SEEBY. *(Not getting up)* Here's your lunch.

RODDY. *(Coming back)* Oh, thank you. *(She hands it to him without looking at him, looking front. He looks at her, sighing deeply.)* Eusebia—

SEEBY. Yes?

RODDY. *(Huskily)* Eusebia—would you go with me, just to-day?

SEEBY. *(Incredulously)* Go *with* you? *(Rises.)*

RODDY. Just to-day?

SEEBY. Go with you—when I've just been telling you to work alone?

RODDY. *(Almost desperately)* Yes. I hate myself so—— If you'd come along—— Wouldn't you? Just this *once?*

SEEBY. Oh, *no! (As if the idea were almost alarming.)*

RODDY. Then it's true; you *don't* have any interest in me except I'm something to be made to do what it *ought* to?

SEEBY. *(Breathlessly, gently)* Why, yes—that's the way—I am.

RODDY. You wouldn't—— *(Asking her again to come.* SEEBY *shakes her head.* RODDY *accepts the answer philosophically and obediently.)* All right. *(Turns decisively and goes up; does not look back. Speaks huskily to* CAPTAIN *in passing without stopping.)* Good-day, Cap'n.

(CAPTAIN *nods.* RODDY *swings his cap up to his head and strides off* L. *on veranda.* SEEBY *stands* C., *looking after him, her hands to her cheek and throat.* FRANCIS *enters down* R.)

FRANCIS. I want t' ask ye! Do you want the— *(He stops, puzzled, looking at her. He begins again)* D'you——

MRS. FREEHART. *(Looks in from veranda; whispers sharply)* Hush up!

(SEEBY, *unconscious of them, stares front; tears are near her eyes.)*

CAPTAIN. *(Looking off* L. *to back, speaks slowly)* Mr. Roddy goin' off by himself to-day. He looks kind o' lonely.

SEEBY. *Oh! (This is just an impulsive monosyllable of greatest pity and tenderness. She turns and almost runs out* C.E. *and off* L., *following* RODDY.)

FRANCIS. Why, what——

(MRS. FREEHART *comes in.)*

MRS. FREEHART. *(In a hushed voice)* You can look an' *see,* can't ye? *(He goes up a little way to* R. *of* C.E., *near* MRS. FREEHART. *Both looking off.)*

CAPTAIN. *(In a softened voice)* Seeby's caught up to him. Mr. Roddy, he looks like he don't know

which way to go. *(He puts the binoculars to his eyes.)*

FRANCIS. Look!

MRS. FREEHART. Why, she's took his hand.

CAPTAIN. *(Looking through the glasses)* Yes, suh; she's a leadin' of him. *(He puts down the binoculars, wipes his eyes, looks down stage, as if toward the others, and repeats in a gently tremulous voice)* Yes, suh, she's a-leadin' of him—she's a-leadin' of him—by the hand.

CURTAIN

DOROTHY'S NEIGHBORS.

A brand new comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "The New Co-Ed," "Tempest and Sunshine," and many other successful plays. 4 males, 7 females. The scenes are extremely easy to arrange; two plain interiors and one exterior, a garden, or, if necessary, the two interiors will answer. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story is about vocational training, a subject now widely discussed; also, the distribution of large wealth.

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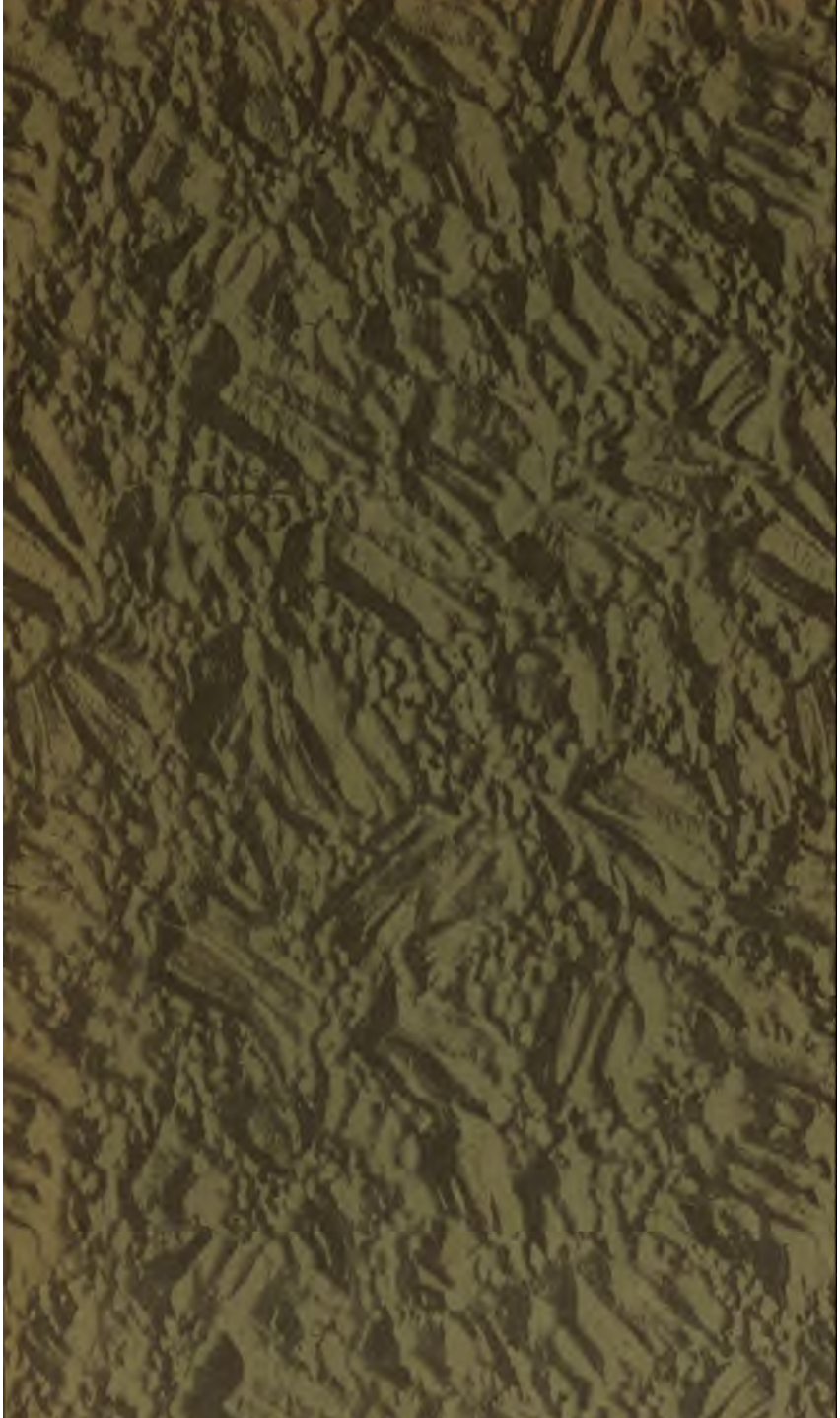
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